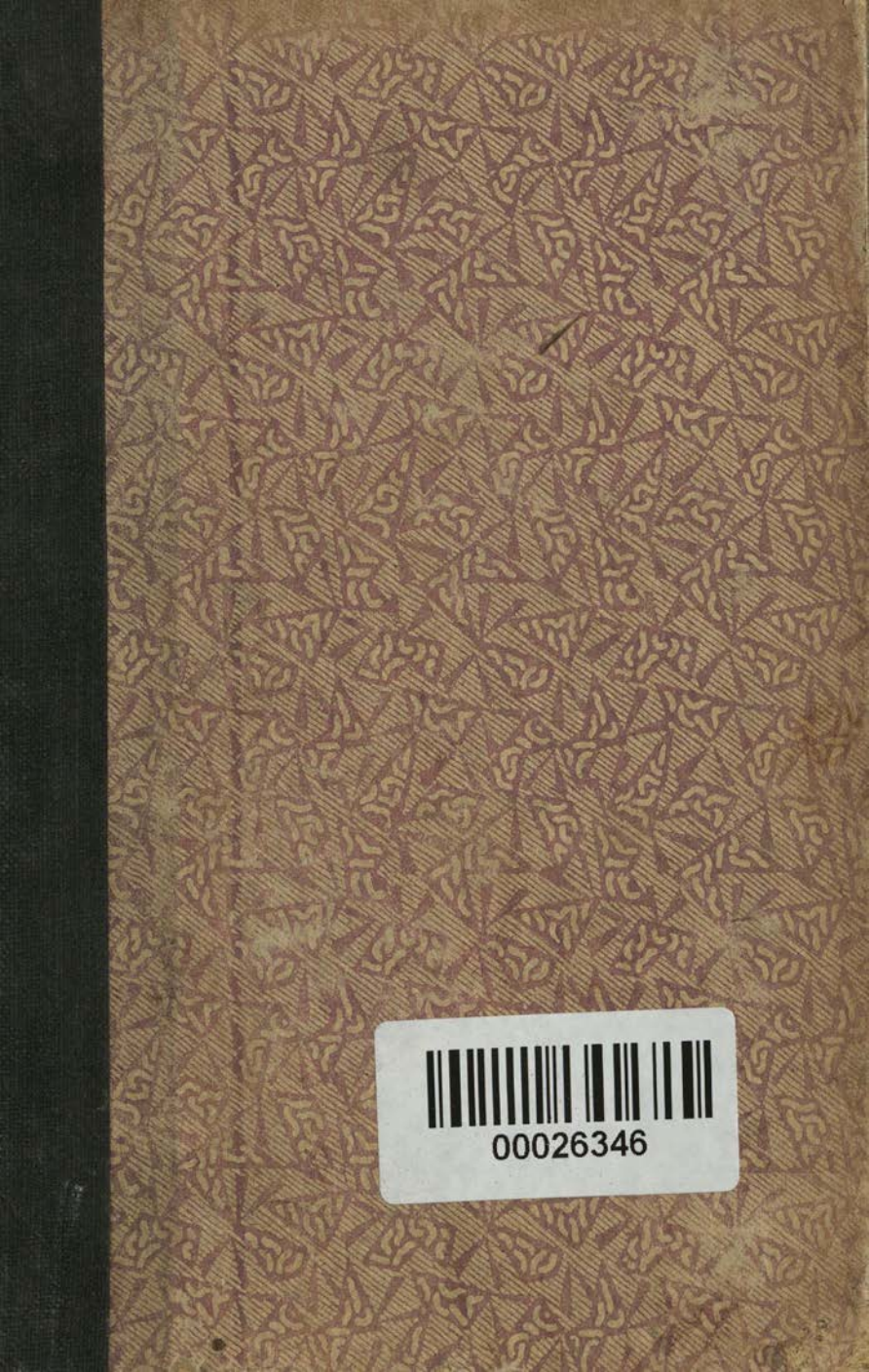

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LADY HAMILTON

AND

LORD NELSON.

VOL. II.

LADY HAMILTON

AND

LORD NELSON

AN HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY BASED ON LETTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS IN THE POSSESSION OF ALFRED MORRISON, ESQ. OF FONTHILL, WILTSHIRE.

BY

JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON

AUTHOR OF "THE REAL LORD BYRON," ETC.

26346

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. II.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1888.

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LADY HAMILTON

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LORD NELSON.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER THE GREAT BATTLE.

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1798 A.D.

FOUGHT on the 1st of August, 1798, the Battle of the Nile, that made Nelson a peer of the realm and the hero of all who loved Great Britain, was no sooner won, than the wounded Admiral and his secretary set to work on the papers, that gave England the chief particulars of her great victory. The dispatches committed to Captain Berry were lost at sea, but the duplicate dispatches, which the Honourable Thomas Capel carried overland (*viâ* Naples) reached their

destination. At Naples, the intelligence from the Nile was received with equal delight by the favourers of England and dismay by Monsieur Garat's disciples. Bringing an indescribable relief from dismal apprehensions to the Neapolitan English, who had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of Nelson's squadron from the 4th of June, when the British Minister had announced to the eighty guests at his dinner-table, that Sir Horatio Nelson had been provided with a squadron for their protection, the news occasioned the Court and inferior populace of Naples a gladness that declared itself with characteristic vehemence. But in all Naples no two persons were more overpowered by painful ecstacies of joy than the two women, who had reason to congratulate themselves on having contributed to the success, which Nelson had declared beforehand should be known as their victory. On hearing the too joyful news, which was communicated to her without due forethought for the shock it would cause so emotional a creature, Lady Hamilton fell senseless to the ground, and sustained from the fall injuries that three weeks later were visible in bruises. Maria Caroline was affected no less violently, though in a more usual way. Crying and laughing hysterically, the proud and strong-willed Queen surrendered herself to extravagances of natural feeling and womanly weakness. Kissing and embracing her husband and children, now hugging them passionately and declaring loudly that they were 'saved,' now throwing herself on the nearest couch to sob convulsively, now racing through the rooms of her palace, pouring forth ejaculations of undying grati-

tude to the heroic Nelson, who had delivered her and her dear ones from the monsters who were thirsting for their blood, she displayed a most unqueenly excitement at the sudden change of fortune. 'How obliged and grateful I am to you!' she wrote to Lady Hamilton. 'I cry, laugh, and embrace my children and husband . . . . If a portrait of Nelson is taken, I will have it in my chamber. My gratitude is engraven on my heart; *vive, vive* the brave nation and its navy! I participate in the glory doubly, as being so greatly for our advantage, and also redounding to the fame of the first flag in the world;—*hip! hip!* my dear Lady. I am wild with joy; with what pleasure I shall see our heroes this evening. I cannot say that this binds me to your brave nation, for I have always been, am, and shall be attached to it!'

On coming to Naples, on the 1st* of September, 1798, with a letter of introduction to Lady Hamilton, Captain Capel, the bearer of the duplicate despatches, and Captain Hoste, the captain of the brig *Mutine*, were welcomed to her house, and, without delay, carried by Sir William Hamilton to the Royal Palace, where they communicated their glad tidings to the Prime Minister. On leaving the palace, they were met by Lady Hamilton, who, taking them into her carriage, drove with them through the streets of

* The precise day of Captain Capel's arrival in Naples is one of numerous points of Nelson's story, respecting which the authorities are at variance. Pettigrew makes it 1st of September, 1798. But writing to Nelson from Naples, on the 8th of September, 1798, Sir William Hamilton says, 'Captain Capel arrived here on Monday last, about one o'clock in the afternoon, and was off next day:'—the said Monday being the 3rd of September, 1798.

Naples till dark, the nature of the news from Egypt being declared to the populace by the words 'Nelson and Victory,' that appeared in gold letters on the bandeau which she wore on her forehead. Catching the significance of this legend, the Lazzaroni rent the air with cries of 'Viva Nelson.' After dark, when bon-fires and other illuminations caused the thoroughfares of every quarter of the capital to be densely thronged with England's well-wishers, the people of the French party stayed at home. At the opera-house, the favourite play-room of French insolence, whither the two officers of the British Navy went with their host and hostess, the absence of French cockades from the theatre was noticed by the party in the Minister's box. Lady Hamilton's bandeau had driven the cockades from 'the house.'

Three weeks later, Nelson was received with honours seldom rendered to a visitor of less than royal rank. On the approach of the *Vanguard*, with the conqueror on board, and his flag showing forth bravely over the noble ship, all the 'well-affected' of Naples who could get place on barge or boat went forth over the dancing waters, to welcome the Admiral who had shattered the Corsican's navy, and dashed the insolence of France. The royal barge, with Ferdinand of Naples, his brilliant entourage and musicians on board, was the first of the stately gala-boats to move from harbour seawards. Following the King's barge at a respectful distance, a gradually widening and lengthening train of holiday ships moved in the same direction. Heading this long procession of vessels, freighted with courtiers

and nobles, the British Minister and Lady Hamilton were rowed by their liveried boatmen towards the ship-of-war in a barge, gaily decked with national emblems and colours, and provided with a band, whose British airs were caught up by the musicians of the other barges, till sea, and air, and upper heaven resounded with 'Rule Britannia' and 'See the conquering Hero comes.' To be with the pleasure-fleet, that glided amidst these jubilant strains towards the Conqueror of the Nile, was to feel as though all Naples were moving out to sea in universal gala in a vast and picturesque service of adoration to the Navy of the North. Springing from her barge as soon as it had come alongside one of the *Vanguard's* boats, Lady Hamilton flew to her hero's presence, and, exclaiming, 'O God! is it possible?' as she saw in an instant the change wrought by five years in her hero's appearance, threw her arms about him. 'She fell,' Nelson wrote to his wife, 'into my *arm* more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters to rights.' It was, in truth, a moment for weeping, as well as for rejoicing, so strongly had the labours and mischances of war marked the conqueror in so many fights. Since the Hamiltons bade him 'farewell' in '93, he had lost an arm and eye. Care had ploughed yet deeper the lines of his resolute and anxious face, and there, on the high forehead, directly over the right eye, appeared the surgical dressing that concealed his latest and still unhealed wound. No wonder he looked pale, and worn, and faint, for he was still only 'getting-up' from the fever, 'which,' as he

wrote, on the 12th of August, to Earl St. Vincent, had so 'very near done his business,' that for 'eighteen hours his life was thought to be past hope.'

Scarcely had Lady Hamilton escaped, through tears, from embarrassing emotion, when the King of Naples appeared on the *Vanguard's* deck, to take the Admiral by the hand, and to call him, gratefully, 'Deliverer and Preserver.' The title thus accorded to him by Ferdinand the Bourbon was the same title that was assigned to him by popular sentiment. 'In short,' Nelson wrote to his wife, 'all Naples calls me "Nostro Liberatore"; my greeting from the lower classes was truly affecting.'

With what an air of mingled dignity and respectfulness, with what simple cordiality and unassuming ease, Nelson received the King, and conducted him over the *Vanguard*, showing him every part of the ship, and (with characteristic considerateness for the invalids) introducing His Majesty to the wounded seamen, we know from the account given by Miss Cornelia Knight (woman of letters and the Court, and an Admiral's daughter) of Ferdinand's visit to the hero's ship. After looking over the ship, the Bourbon sovereign took a seat with the Admiral's other guests at the breakfast-table, on which Miss Knight soon descried the small bird, hopping about amongst the plates and dishes, that flying on board the *Vanguard* on the evening before the great battle, forbore to leave the ship till she had safely made the voyage to Naples. For the moment, the lady of letters was more interested in the bird she now met for the first time than in the Prince Caraccioli,

whom she had often seen at General di Pietra's, and who, on coming to Nelson's presence shortly before breakfast, congratulated him on the famous victory with a fit show of heartiness and sincerity, as though he bore the British Admiral no ill for having passed before his frigate in the engagement off Corsica.

The King having paid and finished the visit of welcome to the *Vanguard*, Nelson went to the British Embassy at Naples, where as the guest of Sir William Hamilton he was nursed into good health by Lady Hamilton, who could not have ministered to him more assiduously and tenderly had he been her brother. 'I hope some day,' Nelson (*vide* Clarke and McArthur, vol. ii, p. 101) wrote to his wife, 'to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton; she is one of the very best women in this world; she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's, to me, is more than I can express; I am in their house, and I may now tell you, it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up.'

Whilst Nelson's letters to his wife afford super-abundant testimony that he and 'Fanny' were not from the first the uncongenial and inauspiciously mated couple biography has declared them, and that his passion for Lady Hamilton had no commencement in their brief intercourse in 1793, there is no lack of evidence that weeks and even months had followed his reappearance at Naples in 1798, before his regard for her exceeded the limits of friendship, warmed and coloured by chivalric admiration. When Lady Knight (Miss Cornelia Knight's mother) enquired

whether the day, on which he won the Battle of the Nile, was not the happiest of his whole life, Fanny Nisbet's husband answered stoutly, 'No, Madam, the happiest was that on which I married Lady Nelson.'

At Naples, Nelson needed Lady Hamilton's care for his health all the more, because the festive life he necessarily led in the gay capital was far from favourable to his bodily welfare. Whilst he could not decline the hospitalities of the Royal Palace, it would have exposed him to misconstruction had he refused invitations from ministers and other great people. Hence the Admiral saw enough of Neapolitan high life to form a most unfavourable opinion of it by the 30th of September, 1798, on which day (*vide* Clarke and McArthur, vol. ii, p. 103) he wrote to Earl St. Vincent, 'I am very unwell and the miserable conduct of the Court is not like to cool my irritable temper. It is a country of fiddlers and poets . . . . .' [a disdainful monosyllable of six letters for the ladies] 'and scoundrels.' These bitter words dropt from Nelson's pen on the morrow of the grand *fête* (80 people at dinner, and 1740 people at the ball, where eight hundred of the dancers partook of supper), with which Sir William Hamilton celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his guest's birthday. Had it been spread over an entire year, the money spent on this single *fête* would have maintained an ordinary minister's reputation for hospitable free-handedness. What the grand dinner of eighty covers cost Sir William does not appear, but he spent two thousand ducats on the ball and supper. Every dancer wore a button or

ribbon, lettered in gold with 'H.N. Glorious 1st of August.' In the middle of the saloon, where the '. . . . and scoundrels' danced to the music of countless fiddlers under a magnificent canopy, stood the rostral column, displaying the words 'Veni, Vidi, Vici,' and the names of all the Aboukir heroes, which kept its place there to the Admiral's honour for three months, and would have remained longer had not a turn of Fortune's wheel dismissed the King and Queen of Naples, and the whole rabble of their courtly worshippers, to Palermo. When the British national anthem was sung with orchestral accompaniment, it was sung with the additional stanza from Miss Knight's pen,

> Join we great Nelson's name
> First on the roll of fame;
> Him let us sing!
> Spread we his praise around,
> Honour of British ground;
> Who made Nile's shores resound.
> God save the King!

Even the splendours of the ball, given a few days earlier for Nelson's glorification by Count Francis Esterhazy, paled before the brighter brilliance of this Birthday Fête, where everything would have gone well, had the hero's stepson taken less champagne. What passed between Nelson and Josiah Nisbet is not upon the record; but the youngster must have been guilty of extravagant indecorum, under the heat of temper and wine, as Captain Troubridge and another naval officer carried the angry young gentleman by main force from his step-father's presence.' As Josiah Nisbet's misconduct resulted chiefly from

annoyance at his step-father's frankly avowed admiration for Lady Hamilton, it was even less excusable than an outbreak of temper, proceeding altogether from tipsiness. For though it was already whispered about in the mess-rooms of the British squadron, Nelson's regard for his emotional hostess was a sentiment that permitted him—incapable though he was of falsehood—to write (*vide* Clarke and McArthur vol. ii, p. 112) to Lady Nelson on an early day of October, 'The Grand Signior has ordered me a valuable diamond; if it were worth a million, my pleasure would be to see it in your possession. My pride is being your husband, the son of my dear father, and in having Sir William and Lady Hamilton for my friends.' If this association of Lady Hamilton's friendship with his pride in being Lady Nelson's husband points to danger, it is no less significant of the writer's frankness and sincerity.

Writing from notes, which Lady Hamilton put to paper, or enabled her friends to put to paper, in her later time, when she had talked herself into imagining that, instead of being Maria Caroline's worshipper and creature, she had imposed a policy of her own devising on the Queen and Sir William Hamilton, and constrained them to do their utmost to carry it out, Dr. Pettigrew gave his readers this curious bit of literature:

'The French Ambassador urged strongly upon the Neapolitan Court their breach of faith in supplying the British fleet at Syracuse contrary to treaty, and Lady Hamilton availed herself at this juncture, whilst the Court was flushed with joy at the Victory of the Nile, to exercise her influence still further with the Queen, and to urge upon her the bene-

fits and honor likely to result by breaking boldly with the French, and dismissing their ambassador altogether. She also urged the raising an army to oppose the threats of invasion which were then put forth. The Queen, who had been obliged to cede to the necessity of receiving an Envoy from that nation, which was tinged with the blood of her sister, her brother-in-law, and her nephew, failed not to enter in the most lively manner into these proposals, and communicated them to the King. Lady Hamilton did the same to Sir William, and Sir Horatio Nelson, and the Minister, Sir John Acton, being brought into favour of the measure, the Council determined to dismiss the French Ambassador, who, together with his suite, was sent off at twenty-four hours' notice. An army also of 35,000 men was raised in nearly a month. They marched from St. Germain's, under the command of General Mack, the King himself accompanying the army. On the 21st of November they opposed a scattered and inferior force, but not with success, and in the course of one month only from that time the Royal family were obliged to quit Naples, and embark for Palermo.'

In this way has the story of Lady Hamilton's doings been told by herself and her friends, in order to show that she was an extremely ill-used woman, because successive English Administrations declined to give her a pension of £500 a-year. The beautiful and naturally clever woman, who had been educated only to sing and enact *tableaux-vivants*, to deliver recitals from a few dramas and to talk Italian and French, to dance well and dress as showily as possible on £150 a-year, and whose knowledge of Italian and European politics had been wholly picked up from her husband and the Queen of Naples, the chatter of courtly coteries and the anti-French talk of a few naval officers, is made accountable for the policy that had slowly shaped itself in the strong,

resolute, and ruling brain of Maria Caroline. Till the Queen took her into favour, because she saw a way of using her for political ends, Sir William Hamilton had never encouraged Emma to be curious about matters especially interesting to statesmen and stateswomen. Three years and six months had barely passed since she wrote Mr. Charles Greville, 'Send me some news political and private; for, against my will, *owing to my situation here*, I am got into politicks, and I wish to have news for our dear much-loved Queen, whom I adore.' Yet we are seriously required by grave historians to believe that this woman of beauty and music and elegant frivolities, who had so lately 'got into politicks,' not because she had an aptitude and taste for them, but because she wished to make herself more acceptable to her adorable Queen, was in the autumn of 1798 so able and strenuous a stateswoman as to hold absolute sway in political matters over Maria Caroline, the Neapolitan Prime Minister, Sir William Hamilton, Nelson, Earl St. Vincent, and all the subtle and intriguing and practised people of affairs who at that moment determined the action of the Anti-French party of Naples.

The story of the Queen's position and action may be told in a sentence. Knowing that France was plotting to upset her husband's throne, conceiving that a close alliance with Great Britain could alone save her from so great a catastrophe, and having for months desired to help openly the British Admiral whom she had heretofore helped 'under the rose,' Maria Caroline seized the state of feeling occasioned

by the recent destruction of the French fleet as the auspicious moment for breaking with France, turning Garat out of Naples, and putting herself before the world as the enthusiastic ally and peculiar *protégée* of the greatest Naval Power of Europe. In doing so, she only seized the moment for which she had long been waiting. Of course the Queen's cry of 'To arms against the French!' had Lady Hamilton's approval, but to hold the Court Beauty accountable for her mistress's resolve is to attribute to the proverbial fly the movement of the running wheel.

It having been decided that the Sicilies should raise an army of 35,000 men, which King Ferdinand should himself lead against the French as soon as it should be ready to take the field, Nelson, already sick and weary of Naples, sailed for Malta in the middle of October, 1798, after resting for just about three weeks and as many days in the 'country of fiddlers and poets, . . . and scoundrels.' Ever with a keener appetite for fighting than for fêtes, Nelson went to Malta longing for a renewal of the delights of danger, and hopeful that on his promised return to Naples in the first week of the ensuing month he should have opportunities for contributing by sea to the success of important operations against the French in the heart of the Italian peninsula. In both hopes he was disappointed. Malta was not to be taken in a month. The naval expedition to Leghorn was fruitless, because the Neapolitan march against the French army—that, lying in detached bodies all ready to be beaten in batches by an able commander and a sufficient army, belted the

peninsula from sea to sea—was a complete fiasco.

From the first hour of his return to Naples, Nelson mistrusted the Neapolitan army, suspected the General-in-chief, and had a presentiment of the coming disaster. It was something that the army had been raised, and showed bravely in a march-past. Variously estimated at from thirty to forty thousand strong, it was made of handsome fellows, but Nelson's eye was quick to detect the signs of rawness and inexperience, which justified a doubt whether they would fight as well as they looked. Trouble also came from divided councils. Thinking with too little respect of the considerations, which caused the cautious Ariola to urge the King to refrain from matching his new levies against French veterans till the Austrians should have come to his support, Nelson, ever impatient of delay when there was fighting to be done, and ever disdainful of the slowness of land-forces, exclaimed hotly to Ferdinand, 'Either advance sword in hand, ready for death, but trusting God to bless a just cause, or stay and be kicked out of your kingdoms!'—words that were doubtless softened in some degree by the interpreter, who transmitted them from the Admiral, who could not speak Italian, to the King, who knew scarcely a word of English. To such an utterance, however softened, what could the Bourbon answer, except that he would go forward, trusting in God and Nelson?

But Mack, the Austrian General, who could not 'move without five carriages,' was the chief source of Nelson's gloomy apprehensions. If this General was a competent soldier, he was a singularly unfortu-

mate chieftain. Luckless in war, he could not even command success in a sham-fight, planned for the express purpose of exhibiting him to the admiration and confidence of the Neapolitans. On seeing the General with his troops surrounded by 'the enemy' in a mock-battle, Nelson exclaimed savagely, 'This fellow does not understand his business.' Southey remarks of this inauspicious general, 'All that is now doubtful concerning this man is whether he was a coward or a traitor.' Less charitable historians maintain him to have been both. Even by the critics, who palliate his disgrace with references to the newness of his army and the treachery of his officers, it is admitted that he was incompetent. None but a writer of rare generosity and greater boldness would seriously attempt to prove that Mack was a General of genius.

Whilst Nelson was troubled with secret misgivings, though urgent for putting the army at once to the test, Maria Caroline was a-glow with martial fervour, and whatever the Queen said Lady Hamilton repeated with the music of her 'strong voice.' The ladies of the Court were all for quick war and immediate victory; and, though they are less powerful to win battles, women are all powerful in firing manly breasts with the desire to win them. The campaign of seventeen days, with which General Mack's name is so ingloriously associated, was emphatically Maria Caroline's war, and in its fate it resembled a far grander 'woman's war' of more recent date. Eighteen thousand French veterans were in so short a time able to drive before them the forty thousand splendidly-

dressed and picturesque soldiers who marched from Naples northward with flying colours and enlivening music. The worst consequence of their ignominious rout had been so clearly foreseen by Nelson that his intolerance of Ariola's prudent counsel is the more remarkable. His justification of his own scarcely-judicious advice was that alacrity offered Ferdinand his only chance of victory, or an escape from ignominious defeat. 'If Mack is defeated,' he said, 'in fourteen days this country is lost; for the emperor has not yet moved his army, and Naples has not the power of resisting the enemy. It was not a case for choice, but of necessity, which induced the king to march out of his kingdom, and not wait till the French had collected a force sufficient to drive him out of it in a week.' Had the Neapolitan army been such a fleet as won the victory of the Nile, and could the fight have been fought at sea, Nelson would have managed matters so that there would have been no retreat to Palermo.

CHAPTER II.

THE FLIGHT TO PALERMO.

Consequences of Mack's Fiasco—Riots and Assassinations at Naples—Ferdinand's Reluctance to leave Naples—Maria Caroline's Decision—Preparations for the Flight—Lady Hamilton's Part in them—Ducats and Diamonds—Secret Intercourse between the Royal Palace and the British Embassy—Southey's 'Heroine of Modern Romance'—The subterranean Passage—Sir William Hamilton's Preparations for Flight—'Our Projects'—Lady and Miss Knight—The Party at Kelim Effendi's House—The Royal Family on Board the *Vanguard*—The Fleet at Sea—Two thousand Fugitives—The stormy Passage—Scene in the State Cabin—Lady Hamilton's Self-possession—She is Everyone's Comforter—Prince Albert dies in her Arms—Arrival at Palermo—Value of Ferdinand's Transported Treasures—Levity and Luxury of the Court—Lady Hamilton's abandoned Valuables—Sir William Hamilton's Losses—Lady Hamilton's Wild Talk and Notes—Examination of them—Lady Hamilton's 'self-delusive Faculty.'

1798 A.D.

THE easy rout of the Neapolitan troops was followed by the incidents which Nelson foresaw would ensue quickly on a decisive defeat of Ferdinand's army. It was followed by riots and assassinations in and near Naples, and by a rapid growth of the party in the capital that had long been looking to France for the means of overthrowing the monarchy and replacing it with a republic.

Under these circumstances, with no means or time

to convert the brave Lazzaroni into an army capable of repelling the French veterans who were marching upon Naples, it is not wonderful that Maria Caroline decided on the withdrawal to Palermo, which in Nelson's opinion offered the only chance of security for her person and family, unless she determined to quit the Sicilies—an alternative which he, of course, neither recommended nor suggested. The King, who had returned to Naples from his brief stay at Rome, was for several reasons reluctant to retreat from the capital, where he had the Lazzaroni with him to a man, albeit his very household harboured sympathizers with the French party. Though in crossing the water to Palermo he would only be moving from one point of his dominions to another, his flight from the capital at such a moment would naturally be regarded by his enemies as a first step towards abdication. But Maria Caroline was set on retiring to Palermo, and it was not in Ferdinand's weak nature to oppose her masterful will. Ferdinand, however, declared he would not leave Naples without his private store of gold, his jewels, the most precious of his works of art, and whatever specie remained in the public treasury. If he went to Palermo, he must go thither with the means to live like a King. On this point the Queen was wholly of his mind. It was, therefore, decided that no time should be lost in moving the treasure of the Palace, and the best paintings from Caserta, on board the transports that would attend the vessels of war to the Sicilian capital.

In her later time, when she had fully persuaded herself that the migration from Naples to Palermo

Hamilton used to
on the King, who
Queen, in winning
pated difficulty. 'I,
he imaginative notes
in a spirit that pre-
wances for the writer's
n, 'began the work my-
vels, and then thirty-six
ouse; these I marked as
bliged to use every device to
prevent having any idea of our pro-
ceedings. By such stratagems I got those
treasures embarked, and this point gained, the King's
esolution of coming off was strengthened—the
Queen I was sure of.' It is not surprising she 'was
ure of the Queen,' as it was Maria Caroline who
directed the operations, merely using her *confidante* as
n agent for carrying them out in some of their
etails. It is certain that Lady Hamilton did not
nove the jewels first and then the gold; for Maria
'aroline's letters prove that the removal of the jewels
was preceded by the removal of the gold. It is
certain that Lady Hamilton removed from the royal
palace neither the jewels nor the gold, which were
sent after dark by Maria Caroline herself to Lady
Hamilton, who had already been instructed to put
them in Nelson's charge.

In the evening of the 17th of December, 1798, Maria Caroline was on the point of sending Saverio Rodino, Yeoman of the Chamber, with sixty thousand gold ducats to the British Embassy, when, on be-

thinking herself th
from her house at
deferred sending the
ing. In the night
brought the money u
British Minister's house,
the Queen (*vide* Pettigr
pp. 175—6) wrote to La
send you this evening all
both the King's and mine, a
in gold, which is our all, for
lated. The diamonds of the
female, will come to-morrow even
to Lord Admiral Nelson. The General will have
already spoken to him about our money, that is fo
paying the troops and seamen.' The money referre
to in this last sentence was probably part of th
money which Ferdinand was charged by Princ
Caracciolo with carrying off to Sicily, instead o
applying it to the proper use—the payment of th
army. Anyhow it was money which certainly Lad
Hamilton cannot be said to have *removed* from th
Royal Palace to 'our house.' In the same note,
dated 17th December, 1798, Maria Caroline wrote,
'Saverio, a faithful and sure man, accompanies the
money. This was written yesterday, but knowing of
the fête at Niza's, I would not send for fear of incom-
moding: but to-night I shall send you everything—
jewels, money, and necessaries, for our misfortunes
are pressing.'

Later in the same evening of the 18th of December,
'the diamonds of the family,' together with more

oney and necessaries, were brought to the British mbassy, for consignment to Nelson. And yet later he same evening, there came from the Royal ace to Sir William Hamilton's house a third con- ment of goods, together with a note (dated 18th ember, 1798) in the Queen's handwriting to Lady milton, beginning with words to this effect,— dear Lady, I send three more coffers and a small ; the three contain some linen for my children oard and some dresses, in the box there are some ll things. I hope it is not wrong to send them,— remainder shall go by a Sicilian vessel to avoid nvenience.'

the evening of the 19th of December, 1798, ia Caroline sent cases great and small to the ish Embassy for consignment to Nelson, saying n accompanying note to Lady Hamilton, 'My r Lady, I abuse your goodness as well as that of brave Admiral. Let the great cases be thrown the hold, the small ones are easier to dispose of. fortunately I have such a large family . . . . . *ay send me, my dear friend, information of everything d be certain of my discretion.*' In the morning of e same day, the Queen had written to Lady amilton, announcing that these great and small ses would arrive at night. 'I will,' she says in this rlier note of 19th December, 1798, 'send some more ses to-night, but the things belonging to my mily will be very numerous, *as it is for life.* Tell ne frankly then, if I may send to the dock to-night y a trusty man (Lalo or Saverio) our trunks and if transport can take them, or if that would be

troublesome let me know, so that I may then ta other steps.' The words of this last extract whic have printed in italics are a noteworthy indica how, in her dismay and depression at the news c ing to her day by day, and hour by hour, of f disasters to the flying fragments of her army, M Caroline for the moment conceived of herself as the point of leaving Naples for ever.

The evidence of these letters by the Queen ac with Nelson's account of the preparation for the fli 'The whole correspondence,' the Admiral wrot Earl St. Vincent on 28th Dec., 1798, 'relative to most important business was carried out with greatest address by Lady Hamilton and the Queen, being constantly in the habits of correspondence one could suspect. It would have been highly imp dent in either Sir William Hamilton or myself to h gone to the Court, as we knew that all our mo ments were watched, and even an idea by Jacobins of arresting our persons as a hostage (as th foolishly imagined) against the attack of Nap should the French get possession of it. Lady Ham ton, from this time' [i.e. 14th Dec.] 'to the 21st, ev night received the jewels of the Royal Family, e etc., and such clothes as might be necessary for t very large party to embark, to the amount, I am co fident, of full two millions five hundred thousa pounds sterling.' Reporting that the treasure of th palace was received every night by Lady Hamilto Nelson says nothing to imply that she alone arrange the flight.

Falling in with the humour of Lady Hamilton's

artisans, Southey wrote in his 'Life of Nelson,'

'Meantime Lady Hamilton arranged everything for the emoval of the royal family. This was conducted, on her art, with the greatest address, and without suspicion, be- se she had been in habits of constant correspondence with queen. It was known that the removal could not be cted without danger; for the mob, especially the lazzaroni, re attached to the King: and as, at this time, they felt a tural presumption in their own numbers and strength, they isted that he should not leave Naples . . . . . Lady Hamilton, like a heroine of modern romance, explored, with no little danger, a subterranean passage, leading from the palace to the seaside: through this passage the royal treasures, the choicest pieces of painting and sculpture, and other property, to the amount of two millions and a half, were conveyed to the shore, and stowed safely on board the English ships.'

As these words have been especially fruitful of misconception respecting Lady Hamilton's part in the removal of the royal family, they should be considered carefully in connection with the aforegiven scraps from the Queen's letters to the 'heroine of modern romance,' which afford conclusive evidence that, instead of being packed under Lady Hamilton's supervision, the royal treasures were prepared for removal by Maria Caroline and her confidential servants; that, instead of being *removed* by Lady Hamilton and her agents, the treasures were sent by the Queen, under charge of her own confidential servants, *to* Lady Hamilton at the British Embassy, *for* consignment to Nelson; and that, instead of busying herself at the palace in packing and removing the royal treasures during the days immediately preceding the flight, Lady Hamilton was no less careful

than Sir William Hamilton and Nelson to avoid t[he] palace, which she could not have visited just then [as] often and openly as romantic biography has allege[d] without giving rise to suspicions in the populace [of] what was being done secretly. Had Lady Hamilt[on] been in close personal communication with the Qu[een] on the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st of Decemb[er] there would have been no need for Maria Caroline [to] write to her so often during those five days. N[or] would the Queen have written on the 19th day, entreating Lady Hamilton to *send* her intelligence of what was being done at the British Embassy and the docks:—'Pray *send me*, my dear friend, information of everything, and be certain of my discretion.' To the careful and critical reader of what is published in Pettigrew's book of Maria Caroline's letters to her *confidante*, it is obvious that the epistles were one side of a correspondence between two women, who during those days refrained from visiting one another, and in communicating with one another by letters were at pains to do so with the greatest secresy. Moreover, Lady Hamilton was too busy, in helping Sir William Hamilton to pack his vases and pictures, to have time just then for personal attendance on the Queen.

Probably Lady Hamilton visited the subterranean passage before the night of the 21st of December. Southey used language, which could not fail to mislead hasty and romantic readers, when he wrote that 'like a heroine of modern romance,' she 'explored with no little danger, the subterraneous passage,' as though she were in some sense the discoverer of it

plying, as his words certainly do imply, that oyal treasures, after being carried, under Lady lton's personal superintendence, through this rious underground way, were shipt at the where on the night of the 21st the royal fugi- were taken on board Nelson's boats, Southey naccurate. On being conveyed out of the , the treasures were taken at night either to cks, or to Lady Hamilton's house for transmis- the docks, where some of them were put on the vessels appointed to carry them to Palermo, other things (like the gold, diamonds, and n) were put on board the craft appointed to them to vessels of war lying in the bay. In all the treasures, instead of being removed out of the e *by* Lady Hamilton, were sent out of the palace e Queen. In respect to those of the treasures were sent to the British Embassy, Lady Hamil- was no more than the secret channel through h Maria Caroline sent them to Nelson, just as had in former time been the secret channel gh which the Queen sent political intelligence r William Hamilton and the English government. had been intended that the royal fugitives ld go on board the *Vanguard* (Nelson's flag-ship) e night of the 20th of December, but almost at ast moment the embarcation was postponed for -and-twenty hours by a letter, in which Sir John on informed Nelson that certain money was not yet pped, and that the King and Queen would not ve till it was in the British admiral's hands. 'Their cilian Majestyes,' the Prime Minister wrote to Nel-

son under date of the 20th of December, 1798
extremely sensible and thankfull to your Lord
counsels and friendley as well as salutary assist
But as the money, unfortunately, is not shippe
and secured yet under your protection, their Maj
have suspended, till to-morrow night the 21st
embarcation':—words showing clearly that
nand held steadily to his resolve of not leavi
money behind him, and that their Majesties
to the last moment of their stay at Naples
completely at Lady Hamilton's disposal as f
biographers have represented. In truth, thes
graphers are without a scrap of writing, dat
December, 1798, supporting their opinion that
Hamilton designed and arranged the retreat to S
To give this opinion an appearance of restin
contemporary manuscript evidence, Pettigrew
'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii) published this undate
unsigned note of Lady Hamilton's writing: 'My
Lord, I have this moment received a letter fron
Adorable Queen. She is arrived with the King.
had much to do to persuade him, but he appr
of all *our projects*. She is worn out with fatigue
morrow I will send you her letter. God bless
Yours sincerely.' This brief note from Lady H
ton to Nelson is clearly insufficient for the justi
tion of the biographers. Showing that Ferdi
on his return from Rome disliked the notion o
treating from Naples (a matter that has never
questioned), the note shows also that the *proj*
which had Nelson's and Lady Hamilton's appro
were also the projects of the Queen, who had v

ulty persuaded the King to assent to them. gh it has been strangely exaggerated and d by romantic writers, Lady Hamilton's he arrangements for transferring the Nea- urt to Palermo was far from trivial. In- as so singular and important as to need no nents and poetical embellishments for the ent of the title it gave her to be rated with English women. It is sufficiently romantic woman, who some twenty years before had London nurserymaid, was the one lady of on whose discretion and fidelity a proud could fully rely at a moment of overwhelming une and extreme peril. She would have earned e in the historic Temple, had she only served Caroline faithfully in receiving and transmitting onsignments of treasure, and in keeping the n precisely informed of Nelson's arrangements oving the Court. But Lady Hamilton did more this. Whilst proving herself a good medium of course between Maria Caroline and the British iral, she aided the Queen with judicious advice hing the details of the measures in progress, and rious ways contributed so greatly to the success e project, to the comfort of the royal fugitives ng the stormy and perilous voyage, and also to ir comfort after they had landed at Palermo, that rd Nelson did not exceed the license of compliment declaring that 'she seemed to be an angel drop om Heaven for the preservation of the Royal family. he was also greatly serviceable to several people n whose secresy she could rely, in giving them timely

notice to prepare for events, that might at a
render them greatly desirous of leaving N
well-convoyed transport.

Of the brief notes she penned for the gu
encouragement of divers Englishwomen a
for flight drew nearer, the following undat
writing may be given as a fair example:
possible, my dear Miss Knight, to come to y
nor this even; for we have to go out. Th
as they were, *but* keep yourself in readiness,
No embarcation for the things, the weather
bad. So patience. We shall see the Queen t
God bless you booth. Your agitated and sincere
I will advise you, my dearest friend, to-nig
Prince C——lay. I am sure it will be done.'
brief note, which must have been *greatly* rea
to Lady and Miss Knight, who had not re
particulars of information that could not be
communicated to a large number of persons, se
have been written in the afternoon of the 2
December.

All arrangements for withdrawing the Royal f
from a position of rapidly growing perils had
made before nightfall of that day. On the eve
of the 21st it was necessary for the British Minis
wife to appear at a party given by Kelim Effendi,
envoy sent to Naples by the Grand Signior to pu
Nelson's hands the Plume of Triumph. Had
failed to attend this assembly her absence might ha
roused suspicions that would have imperilled t
enterprise, for which there had been so much hidd
preparation. On stealing from the party when it w

s gayest, Lady Hamilton hastened on foot to the al Palace, thinking it best to leave her carriage servants where they would cause spectators to gine she was still at the *fête*. As she drew her aps about her and lowered her veil, so that she ght not be recognized by any of the throng about elim Effendi's house, it wanted only a quarter of an our of the time when she had promised to be with the Queen, and attend her through the subterranean passage, at whose seaward exit they and their party would be received by Nelson and Captain Hope, ready to conduct the fugitives to three barges, lying close to shore at the corner of the arsenal. No hitch occurred in the execution of the well-matured arrangement. The Admiral came towards Maria Caroline and Ferdinand at the shore-end of the hidden viaduct, the well-manned boats were at the appointed spot, and at nine p.m. the King and Queen came on board the *Vanguard* with their family,—the Queen feeling she had got out of Naples none too soon, whilst the King was of opinion he should have done wrong to stay there much later.

Ferdinand and Maria Caroline safe on board the *Vanguard*, notice was given promptly to the British merchants, who had embarked property in the transports bound for Palermo, that they would be received on board one or another of the ships of the squadron. These merchants having been provided with accommodation for the voyage, notice was given to the merchants of other nationalities that, if they wished to join in the retreat, they should lose no time in seeking admittance to the transports. Arrangements had of

course already been made for the reception of [illegible] official personages, well-affected nobles and l[illegible] courtiers, together with some of their servants. [illegible]fore all these various people could gain their respec[illegible] vessels, the royal personages on the *Vanguard* h[illegible] passed two dreary nights and two long days at anch[illegible] in the bay, whilst a wind, that would have borne the[illegible] gaily to Palermo, blew steadily from the north-east[illegible] At length on the night of the 23rd (Captain W. H. Smyth says 24th) the fleet, with some two thousand fugitives on board, moved out to sea, the *Vanguard* taking the lead of the *Archimedes* (a Neapolitan 74-gun ship of the line) and the *Sannite* corvette, commanded by Francesco Caracciolo, and some twenty sail of merchantmen and transports.

The wind still blew from the east, and all went fairly well till the fleet cleared Capri, when one of those sudden disturbances of the atmosphere, that are common in all seas, but are perhaps more frequent in the Mediterranean than in any other sea, gave a less agreeable prospect to the voyagers. Chopping in a trice from east to west, the wind rose in squalls that were in themselves bad weather, and declared no better weather might be looked for till a fierce and boisterous gale had spent itself. Rain was falling in torrents, when, at about half-past one, a violent blast of wind from the west-south-west struck the *Vanguard*, rending her topsails, driver and foretopmast staysail to ribbons. The shock was not favourable to the dignity and bearing of the royal personages, the ambassadors, Neapolitan nobles, English gentlemen and potential merchants, who had deemed themselves

mate in getting safely to the British admiral's ship. For some hours it seemed to the landlubbers as they had escaped danger on land only to encounter death at sea. The scene in Nelson's cabin was superlatively wretched, though the prevailing misery was not without comical incidents, in a throng of people trained by years of courtly service to honour the rules of etiquette even more highly than the precepts of virtue.

It was now that Lady Hamilton, an excellent sailor, displayed some of her most valuable qualities. Taking to her arms the younger of the royal children, who were very fond of her, she fondled them with the dexterity of a woman who had herself been a nursery-maid, and cheered them with kisses, as she carried them off to their berths. The babes having been disposed of, Lady Hamilton hastened to the Queen (whose attendants were all prostrate with sea-sickness) and waited on her like a servant. After putting the unhappy Queen in such poor ease as was attainable under the circumstances, she went off in search of her husband, dropping on her way sympathetic words to the sufferers, who impeded her progress. When she at length came upon Sir William in his sleeping-cabin, she found him sitting calmly with a loaded pistol in either hand, as though he had a purpose of ending the hurricane with a bullet. On being asked what he was after, Sir William explained that, as soon as he felt the vessel sinking, he meant to shoot himself, so as to escape hearing the 'guggle-guggle-guggle of the salt-water in his throat.' It is to be regretted that, whilst putting this droll story

on paper, Captain W. H. Smyth omitted to p[illegible] record how Lady Hamilton replied to her hus[illegible] with rallying laughter, before she hastened bac[illegible] the state-cabin to offer her services to sufferers [illegible] capable of taking care of themselves.

Soon it devolved on the British Minister's wife [illegible] nurse a drooping infant, whose faint spirit even l[illegible] love and tenderness could not revive. On the mor[illegible] ing of the 25th, just as the storm was abating, Mari[illegible] Caroline's youngest child, the Prince Albert, was taken by illness that, having its origin in sea-sickness, soon closed in death. Languishing throughout the day in Lady Hamilton's embrace, the seven years old child died in her arms during the evening. On the following morning (December 26th), the royal family landed at Palermo; the Queen and Princesses being taken privately on shore so early as five a.m., and the King leaving the *Vanguard* four hours later, when he was welcomed to the island with every sign of loyalty and delight by a large multitude of people. When the passengers had been taken from the *Vanguard*, the fugitives who had come from Naples in other vessels were landed in turn. For some days the populace of Palermo found their chief diversion in watching the pallid faces and disordered dress of the wretched voyagers, who crept languidly to shore from the storm-beaten ships. Writing from recollection, Miss Knight was under the impression that her turn for landing did not come till the 1st of January, 1799.

The value of the treasures brought to Palermo by Ferdinand and Maria Caroline has been variously

mated. Whilst some writers put the sum at two lions or two and a half millions of English money, others have assigned a much higher value to the transported property. In one account of the Prince's injudicious speech before the court-martial that sentenced him to death, Caracciolo is represented as saying, 'The King collected everything that could be converted into specie, on pretence of paying that army, embarked it in His Britannic Majesty's ship *Vanguard*, to the enormous amount of 500 casks, and fled with it to Palermo, there to riot in luxurious safety.' General Pépé computed the value of the antiquities, works of art, bullion and specie, thus carried away from Naples, at twenty million ducats. Computations depending chiefly on appraisements of chattels of uncertain value cannot be relied upon as precisely accurate statements of fact. But whilst it is certain that Ferdinand arrived in Sicily with the means of maintaining his court for a while in all its customary splendour, it is no less certain that, at a time of supreme national calamity, the transplanted court lived with a gaiety and profuseness that would have been adequate to its dignity and the requirements of policy at a season of prosperity. Something no doubt may be urged in palliation, if not in defence, of the brilliant extravagance and costly pomp, with which the King and Queen diverted themselves in what might almost be called 'their exile.' It would, of course, have been unwise of him to live in seclusion from the nobles of the island; and as it was incumbent on him to receive them, he was not without good reasons for receiving them with regal

state and a show of cheerfulness. But when [illegible] siderations of this kind have been urged in palliat[illegible] of luxurious frivolities, it remains that the Court a[illegible] the wealthier islanders displayed at this dark time [illegible] national distress a levity and eagerness for pleasur[illegible] that were alike discreditable to their patriotism and humanity.

For the main purpose of this book, it is less important to know how much treasure Ferdinand took with him from Naples than to ascertain how much the British Minister and his wife lost through the emergencies, that made them the companions of Maria Caroline's flight. In her later time, when she was dominated by the most astounding misconceptions of what she had done and suffered in Italy for her country's good, Lady Hamilton used to aver that, in their zeal for the welfare of the royal family, and in their unwillingness to do anything to provoke suspicions which might imperil the success of the measures for withdrawing the King and the royalists from the grip of the French party, she and Sir William Hamilton went on board the *Vanguard* to Palermo, without having packed and consigned to safe-keeping any of their most valuable possessions. Rather than lessen the chances of the royal family's escape, they left their houses at Naples, Caserta, and Posilippo, with all their artistic treasures, to be pillaged by the revolutionists of Naples, and by the French who were marching on Naples. She made this statement by word of mouth. She made it also in written notes, for the instruction of those of her partisans who urged successive Administrations to

t her a pension. Writing from some of these es, Dr. Pettigrew produced these three sentences the information of his readers,

'To effect, however, the safe departure of the Royal family, together with the property which had thus been conveyed on board the ships, it is obvious many sacrifices must have been necessarily made. The Ambassador was obliged to abandon his house, together with all the valuables it contained, nor was he able to convey away a single article. The private property of Sir William and Lady Hamilton was voluntarily left to prevent discovery of the proceeding, and this Lady Hamilton estimated at £9,000 on her own account and not less than £30,000 on that of Sir William.'

Because this wild statement, made on Lady Hamilton's authority, is curiously devoid of historic truth, it does not follow that she was conscious of the egregious inaccuracy of her assertions, or even had a purpose of qualifying the assertions with an element of serviceable exaggeration, when she made her friends believe, that with heroical disinterestedness she voluntarily abandoned nine thousand pounds worth of her own valuables, and that her husband in the same chivalrous spirit voluntarily abandoned thirty thousand pounds worth of his valuables, rather than do anything which might cause curious and dangerous Neapolitans to say to one another, 'That the great people are preparing to fly appears from the number of cases that are being packed at the British Embassy, and sent night after night to the docks.' In her later time, Lady Hamilton forgot that, instead of being voluntarily abandoned, *all* her husband's choicest vases were packed with the greatest possible care, in eight several cases and shipt for England on

board the *Colossus*. She forgot that, instead of [illegible] voluntarily abandoned, a large number of her husband's inferior vases, and most of his pictures, were carefully packed, sent to the docks, and put on board a certain British transport, that accompanied the fleet from Naples to Palermo in December 1798, and was lying, with the vases and pictures still on board, in the port of Palermo, so late as the 8th of April 1799. She forgot that these last-named cases and pictures eventually reached London and were sold in London. She forgot that, instead of being voluntarily abandoned, the furniture, which her husband left at Naples, Caserta, and Posilippo, when he fled to Palermo, was reluctantly abandoned, *because* Sir William Hamilton could not find time and men requisite for packing it and conveying it to the docks. During their brief occupation of Naples, the French, no doubt, took possession of most of this furniture. But to value at £30,000 what may have been worth £3,000, but can scarcely have been worth £6,000, would be absurd. Lady Hamilton forgot that, whilst Maria Caroline and her confidential agents were packing goods at the Royal Palace of Naples, and at Caserta, for transmission to the docks, the same kind of work was being done at the British Embassy, by Sir William Hamilton, his wife, and the confidential agents.

How about the valuables, worth £9,000, which in her later time Lady Hamilton imagined herself to have voluntarily abandoned, for the advantage of the Royal family of the Two Sicilies, and for the good of Great Britain, whose honour and interest were

erned for the successful removal of that family to ples?* No doubt, she had diamonds and other wels, that were altogether of considerable value. ut these valuables she carried from Naples to alermo, and subsequently carried from Italy to London, where she is known to have parted with them for a particular purpose, to be mentioned hereafter. These precious things, therefore, were no part of the voluntarily abandoned valuables. She had several handsome dresses, given to her from time to time by Sir William Hamilton, and a considerable wardrobe of wearing apparel, bought with part of her allowance of £200 a-year. But she carried with her to Palermo at least some of her best dresses. A considerable proportion of her stock of wearing-apparel seems to have been left at Naples, and in some way to have been lost to her. But for this loss, she was compensated twice, thrice, and again by the gifts of clothing made to her by Maria Caroline. One is, therefore, driven to the conclusion, that the valuables which Lady Hamilton abandoned, on her flight to Palermo, and for whose voluntary abandonment she received no recompense, were imaginary valuables.

At the date of the alleged voluntary abandonment, Lady Hamilton had been in Italy some fourteen years. She came thither with a slender wardrobe and a few pounds in her pocket. During these fourteen years she cannot on the average have spent more than a hundred-a-year on her clothes and other more or less durable chattels. In all, the things of dress cannot have cost her originally more than £1,400.

Yet, she imagined that the voluntarily abandoned portion of them had a value of £9,000.

In her earlier time, the emotional Lady Hamilton had a faculty of talking herself out of all reasonable view of the actual proportions of things. Even when he was bearing testimony to her truthfulness and sincerity, Mr. Charles Greville used sometimes to speak of this faculty, as one of the most distinguishing forces of her mental constitution. To this faculty it was, no doubt, in some degree due that, whilst still quite a young woman, she persuaded herself into thinking Mr. Greville a supremely good man. Even when it has been restrained and kept in abeyance for years, this faculty (not uncommon in highly emotional women) is apt to regain its power in a woman's mind, and, as she slowly loses her vigour in middle age, to dominate the other mental forces, with which it is associated. It was so in her later time with Lady Hamilton, who, on losing prematurely much of her physical activity and mental alertness, may be said to have surrendered herself to her faculty of talking herself out of all reasonable view of the proportions of things. To this faculty must be mainly attributed her extravagant estimate of her 'services to an ungrateful country.'

No doubt, in the years of her premature failure, she was sometimes less truthful than she should have been. On one matter, indeed, she was at least on one occasion betrayed into deplorable falsehood. But even to the last, after ill-health and bodily self-indulgence and bitter mortification had sadly deteriorated

she was in the main a loyal, generous, honest nature. As for her wonderful talk about the proper- she and her husband abandoned on their flight to Palermo, I attribute it wholly to the dangerous faculty,' and in no degree whatever to deliberate untruthfulness.

CHAPTER III.

THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF NAPLES.

Championet's first Proclamation—Desperate Fighting round Naples—Slaughter of the Lazzaroni—Fall of the Capital—The Parthenopeian Republic—Its Extortionate Extravagances—Disgust of the Neapolitans—Reaction for the Monarchy—Insurrections in Calabria and Apulia—Cardinal Ruffo's Successes—Macdonald's Retreat—Austrian Victories—Election at Palermo—Recovery of the Islands—Blockade of Naples—Nelson's Activity and Operations—His Fleet before Naples—Cardinal Ruffo's impudent Negociations—Capitulation of the Castles—Particulars of the Shameful Treaty—Nelson's Repudiation of the Treaty—His Reasons for annulling the Treaty—Ruffo on board the *Foudroyant*—Lady Hamilton acting as Interpreter between the Cardinal and the Admiral—Misconceptions of Nelson's Conduct—Consequent Calumnies—Southey's 'Life of Nelson'—Its deplorable Errors—Alison misled by Southey.

1799 A.D.

No long time after his landing at Palermo, Ferdinand was in possession of intelligence, which must have caused him to be thankful he was away from Naples. On approaching that capital with his veterans, Championet issued a proclamation, containing this announcement of his temper and purpose: 'Be not alarmed, we are not your enemies. The French punish unjust and haughty kings, but they bear no arms against the people. Those who show them-

…es friends of the Republic will be secured in their …rsons and property, and experience only its protection. Disarm the perfidious wretches who excite you to resistance. You will change your government for one of a republican form: I am about to establish a provisional government.' The perfidious wretches were the brave Lazzaroni and other populace of Naples, who a few days later covered themselves with honour in bravely resisting the invader. To how that the French bore no arms against the people, Championet lost no time in sweeping down with volleys of grape-shot those of the Neapolitans who were patriotic enough to oppose the benevolent soldiers of France. As the populace rushed forward to defend their capital, they fell before the guns of the General who bore no arms against these people. In the fights of the 21st and 22nd of January, 1799, the gallant Lazzaroni were slaughtered to the number of several thousands by the philanthropists, who only desired to liberate them from oppression. On the 23rd of January, 1799, whilst French infantry moved in dense columns towards the capital, so as to hold all the approaches to its various quarters, the guns of St. Elmo, directed by Neapolitan traitors, poured cannon-shot down upon the city. When night fell, Naples was in the hands of the liberators,—Championet's troops and the Neapolitan traitors.

A provisional government having been already organized at Championet's head-quarters, with Charles Laubert for its controlling spirit, the fall of the capital was followed quickly by the establishment of the Parthenopeian Republic, with a constitution

that could not have been formed in a way more certain to achieve the end, had its chief object been to make the Neapolitan revolutionists repent their action against the monarchy. One of the government's earliest acts was to placard Naples with manifestoes for the education of the populace. Signed by Championet, one of these placards contained words to the following effect: 'Who is the Capet who pretends to reign over you, in virtue of the investiture of the Pope? Who is the crowned scoundrel who dares to govern you? Let him dread the fate of his rival, who crushed by his despotism the rising liberty of the Gauls!' Had not Ferdinand and his family escaped from Naples before the arrival of the General, who was capable of stimulating in this manner the murderous passions of the Neapolitan Jacobins, it is at least conceivable that the menace would have proved no idle threat, and that Ferdinand and Maria Caroline would, like Louis and Marie Antoinette, have died by the executioner.

Established on the 27th of January, 1799, and extinguished at the latest by the first anniversary of the Battle of the Nile (1st of August, 1799), the Parthenopeian Republic,—or Vesuvian Republic, as Nelson used to call it,—endured long enough to teach the Neapolitan Jacobins that it might be better for a people to endure the ills of a defective monarchical rule than to fly to the unknown evils of a brand-new republican government, maintained by foreign bayonets. Those of the Neapolitan nobles, who had secretly encouraged the Jacobins of the Neapolitan 'French party,' under the impression that

new order of things would afford them greater ers and lighter taxes, were not long in discover- how incorrectly they had counted the changes, d forecast the consequences of the revolution. In a few weeks they learnt from bitter experience how far lighter Ferdinand's rod and rule were than the despotism of the liberating Directory. No conquered city has in modern times been handled more harshly by its victor than Naples was handled by the govern- ment, with which the French generals replaced the Bourbon's tyranny. To defray the first charges of the enterprise that was to have lightened the bur- dens of all classes, the inhabitants of the capital were required to provide immediately twelve millions of francs, whilst the citizens of the rest of the country were ordered to pay no less promptly fifteen millions of francs. On the arrival of Faypoult, to act as commissary of the Republican Convention, orders were made for the sequestration of all royal property, the estates of monasteries, banks containing the pro- perty of individuals, the 'allodial lands, of which the King was only administrator, and even,' says Alison, 'the curiosities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, though still buried in the bowels of the earth.' A financial genius, with as fine a scent for hidden as for overt treasure, Faypoult took all he could get, and then, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cried for more. All his notions and conceptions of financial administration may be summed up in the one word 'sequestration.' Even Championet, with all his greed and shamelessness, was so astounded and scared by this fellow's outrageous proceedings

as to suspend the grand decree of the Convention that might be described as a decree *for the confiscation* of almost everything not in the possession of republicans. Championet paid dearly for his rashness in questioning the discretion of Faypoult's official method. Summoned to Paris, to answer a charge of disobedience, he had the mortification of seeing Macdonald promoted to the supreme command of the French army at Naples.

In one respect the French generals and civil functionaries of the Parthenopeian Republic showed themselves stern republicans. No one could charge them with tenderness to individuals from whom anything could be squeezed, and to institutions having anything that was worth the trouble of stealing. They pillaged arsenals, palaces, modest homes, nobles, merchants, and petty traders with even-handed rapacity. Wherever they came on bronze cannon they seized the guns in the name of the republic, and, melting them down, sold the metal to the highest bidder. Having dealt in this fashion with the cannon, they did likewise with bronze statues and other bronze ornaments of the streets of Naples. Nothing that could be converted into money was too small for these gentlemen to notice and pocket for the good of humanity.

Such extravagant and exasperating extortion necessarily gave rise to discontents that were no less bitter and vehement in the capital than in the rural districts, though the fury against the pick-pocket government broke into open rebellion in the provinces, where nascent insurrection could be hopeful of success, sooner than in Naples, where the authorities were

vilant to detect, and prompt to punish the first signs popular disaffection. Several futile risings preded the revolts in Calabria and Apulia, which peedily assumed proportions that justified the exiles t Palermo in regarding them as signs of a strong eaction in favour of monarchy. Cardinal Ruffo may perhaps have been as bad at heart as he seemed to Nelson, who used to style him 'The Great Devil, who commanded the Christian army;' but it can scarcely be questioned that, in the matter of the Calabrian nsurrection, he rendered good service to the cause which he was suspected a few months later of wishing to injure. A reasonable explanation of the belligerent Cardinal's doubtful and curious game in the commotions of 1799 is, that, whilst sincerely desirous of ridding the country of the French invaders, he wished to put himself on good terms with both parties of the state, and whilst retaining the King's sense of obligation for timely services, to have the grateful regard of the Jacobins for what Nelson used to call the 'shameful armistice.' Could it be justified by evidence, this hypothesis would explain what is especially perplexing in the Cardinal's conduct of the negociations for the surrender of the Castles Nuovo and Uovo. Anyhow, it must be admitted that in the early spring he did good service to Ferdinand and Maria Caroline by bringing together an army of fifteen thousand men, who, whatever may have been their military deficiencies, proved themselves capable of thrashing a numerous force of the Parthenopeian trained bands. It was even more to the good fortune of their Sicilian Majesties, that, whilst Cardinal Ruffo

was doing thus much for their eventual resto... the French in the north of Italy were sustain... reverses, which speedily resulted in the order Ma... donald received to withdraw from Naples and brin... his army to Lombardy.

Sanguine, from an early day of April, of recoverin... speedily all they had lost through Mack's incom... petence, Ferdinand and Maria Caroline no soone... heard that, leaving garrisons in St. Elmo, Nuovo Uovo, Capua, and Gaeta, Macdonald had begun hi... northward retreat with twenty thousand men, tha... they were hopeful of being back at Naples in th... earliest month of autumn. In considering th... gaiety and lightness that distinguished the life of th... Sicilian court during April, May and June, the reade... should take account of the natural effect of this ex... hilarating confidence in the King who loved pleasure and ease, and in the Queen who delighted in pomp and power.

In March, 1799, Nelson received the freedom of Palermo, where he had held the Royal family under his protection from the close of the previous year. On the 28th of that month he ordered Troubridge to take Procida and blockade Naples, acting thus promptly on Ferdinand's verbal authority, which was not put in writing and formally dated till the 30th of March. That Troubridge resembled his chief in promptitude and energy appears from the fact that within twenty-four hours of the date of the Royal mandate for the blockade of Naples, and the recovery of the rebel islands of the bay, Nelson was master of the island, and had also their leading Jacobins clos...

isoners on board his ships. Five days later (April e 5th), the British Admiral celebrated with a salute m the guns of his squadron, the recent victories of e Austrians over the French—the victories that, gether with the animating news of Cardinal Ruffo's uccessful operations against the Parthenopeian ained bands, so greatly elated the King and Queen f Naples.

But whilst he was protecting the Sicilian court and cting so energetically for the restoration of their Sicilian Majesties to the nobler portion of their dominions, in accordance with the spirit and letter of he instructions with which he had been sent into the Mediterranean in the previous year, it may not be supposed that he was even for a single hour unmindful of the larger and controlling part of those instructions, which required him to do his utmost to diminish and destroy the naval power of the French. In guarding the Royal family of Naples he was acting against the French. In seizing the islands he was acting against the French. In blockading Naples, still held by the garrisons of Gaeta, Capua, St. Elmo, Nuovo and Uovo, he was acting against the French. At Malta, partly held and altogether blockaded by Captain (afterwards Sir) Alexander Ball, he was acting against the French. The Admiral's letters and dispatches overflow with conclusive evidence, that, instead of yielding to the fascinations of Lady Hamilton and the enervating frivolities of the Court during his stay at Palermo, till he became for a time indifferent to duty and careless of glory, as his calumniators had the villainous folly to assert, Nelson

never for a week, day, hour or minute was aught l
than the good and supremely noble Nelson, w
lives in the hearts of all chivalrous Englishmen as
greatest naval commander of all England's story, a
the finest example of the human nature that h
made Great Britain the greatest nation of the univers

On learning in May 1799, that a French fleet (
eighteen or nineteen ships-of-the-line and eight or te
frigates or sloops) had put out from Brest, and bee
sighted off Oporto, Nelson was confident the arma
ment would pass the straits, and infest the vast se
he had been appointed to hold against any combina
tion of Frenchmen and Spaniards. The intelligenc
came to him on 12th of May 1799, and on the sam
day, he wrote letters to Rear-Admiral Duckworth
Captain Troubridge, Captain (Sir Alexander) Ball
and Earl St. Vincent, touching arrangements fo
destroying the armament, should it presume to ente
his sea. On the following day (13th of April), in his
anxiety for Sicily, which had been confided to his
keeping, and in his eagerness to be in the fray
wherever British guns should batter the hostile forc
to pieces, he wrote (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Nelson,' vol. i,
p. 225) to Earl St. Vincent, 'Should you come up-
wards without a battle, I hope in that case you wil
afford me an opportunity of joining you; for my heart
would break to be near my Commander-in-chief, and
not assisting him in such a time. What a state I a
in! If I go, I risk, and more than risk, Sicily, an
what is now safe on the Continent; for we know
from experience, that more depends on opinion tha
on acts themselves. As I stay, my heart is breaking

pushing on his preparations with characteristic as though every hour might be a lost opportu-y, and chafing at a brief delay for needful rein-rcements, Nelson sailed on the 20th of May in he *Vanguard* for Maritimo, where he remained till 28th of May, when he returned in the *Foudroyant* to alermo, at Ferdinand's urgent entreaty, and none too soon for the King's needs. On the 12th of June, 1799, just four days after shifting his flag from the *Vanguard* to the *Foudroyant*, he wrote to Earl St. Vincent, 'Let me entreat you come to us with a force fit to fight. We will search the French out, and either in Leghorn, Espezia, or Naples, we will have at them. We shall have so much pleasure in fighting under the eye of our ever great and good Earl.' This to his Commander-in-chief from the Admiral, who was yearning to 'have at the French' —the Admiral, who, according to the slanderers and scribblers, had fallen so completely under the vitiating sway of a lovely woman, as to prefer luxurious sloth to perilous activity, and to be careless for his own and his country's glory!

On the 13th of June, 1799, taking Maria Caroline's eldest son on board the *Foudroyant*, Nelson sailed with his squadron for Naples; but, on receiving new intelligence of the French fleet's movements, he returned to Palermo, and after landing the Sicilian Hereditary Prince there, sailed again for Maritimo, with sixteen sail-of-line, a fire-ship, a brig, a cutter, and high hopes of meeting, beating, defeating the enemy in another day or two. 'Not one moment,' he wrote to Lord Keith, who had now succeeded

Earl St. Vincent in the chief command, 'shall [illegible] in bringing them to battle; for I consider the defence of his Sicilian Majesty's dominions, is place myself alongside the French.' But, though h was quick enough in sending intelligence, Lord Keith was exasperatingly slow in sending needful reinforcements. On the 18th of June, 1799, Nelson (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life,' vol. i, p. 236) wrote to Lady Hamilton,

'I long to be at the French fleet as much as ever a Miss longed for a husband, but prudence stops me. Ought I to risk giving the cursed French a chance of being mistress of the Mediterranean for one hour? I must have reinforcements very soon. Ah! Lord Keith, you have placed me in a situation to lower me in the eyes of Europe; they will say this cried-up Nelson is afraid with eighteen ships to strike twenty-two. The thought kills me. I know what I am equal to, and what ships and men can do, and I declare to God if no more ships could join me, that I would instantly search out the French fleet, and fight them; for, believe me, I have no fear but that of being lowered in the opinion of those I love and esteem.'

Men, who are enervated by voluptuous ease, are not apt to write in this strain to their companions in sloth. That Nelson wrote in this style to Lady Hamilton is of itself strong testimony that he did not regard her as an influence, baneful to his better self. But there is superabundant evidence, that he was scarcely more sensitive than she for his honour, nor readier to make sacrifices for either its enhancement or its preservation. Let this be admitted in bare justice to the woman who, in her vain and egotistic way, lived to find her chief pride and comfort, in imagining she had contributed to his glory.

hs admit this, notwithstanding our reasonable tion against the source of embarrassments, that w a momentary vapour of passing discredit on lson's honour.

Receiving on the 20th of June, 1799, from Lord eith a dispatch, which caused him to change his lan, Nelson lost no time in returning to Palermo, nd sailing thence for Naples, after taking the Here- litary Prince and Sir William and Lady Hamilton on oard the *Foudroyant*. Whilst the Hereditary Prince appeared in the Bay of Naples as the premier general of his father's army, Nelson was invested by virtue of the Order, to which reference has already been made in this chapter, with the powers pertaining to the Commander-in-chief of the expedition for the blockade. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, there- fore, the British Admiral's ship became the seat of Ferdinand's government in the Bay of Naples. In taking with him the British Minister, who was wholly n the confidence of both the King and Queen, Nelson ad an associate especially qualified to give him dis- reet counsel on civil matters, whilst acting as his nterpreter. Lady Hamilton accompanied the expe- dition, in order that she might assist her husband with her pen and knowledge of Italian. How she cted as interpreter between Cardinal Ruffo and Nelson, in their long and vehement altercation especting the capitulation of the castles, will soon ppear. It will also be seen, how she was again used s the channel through which Maria Caroline made her wn and her husband's views on questions of state- olicy known to the British Admiral. In fact, whilst

acting as interpreter by *word of mouth* between N and the Italians who had personal conferences him, Lady Hamilton acted in the same capacity her *pen* between the Admiral in the Bay of Naples their Sicilian Majesties at Palermo. That, in this la named part of her functions on board the *Foudroya* she regarded herself at the time as the mere chann through which the absent Queen 'gave her order will be seen from a remarkable letter, soon to be sub mitted to the readers of this work. At a later date she was also constituted in an informal way Mari Caroline's representative and agent for the arrange ment of multifarious matters with ladies of the Nea politan nobility. Whilst thus acting as a mediato between the Queen and certain of Her Majesty's sub jects, Lady Hamilton did not misdescribe her peculiar position and power, when she styled herself the Queen's representative.

When Nelson entered the Bay of Naples with powerful squadron on the 24th of June, 1799, vigor ous measures were being taken by the combine British, Russian, Turkish, and Neapolitan forces f the reduction of the Forts of Gaieta, Capua, and S Elmo. For four days active hostilities against th Castles Uovo and Nuovo had been suspended in con sequence of Cardinal Ruffo's negociations for th surrender of those two forts, commanding the anchor age of the bay. Of the circumstances and particular of these negociations something must be said.

On the 18th of June, 1799, Captain Foote (actin under a general instruction from Nelson to co-operat with Cardinal Ruffo's land-forces) drew up before th

[illegible]e Uovo in the *Seahorse*, with some Neapolitan [illegible]ates and several gun and mortar-boats; but before [illegible]acking the stronghold, he sent Captain James [illegible]swald to the French Commandant of the fort, with [illegible] written offer of conditions for capitulation. Unlike the Fort St. Elmo, which was garrisoned wholly by French troops, Uovo and Nuovo were defended chiefly by Parthenopeian rebels, some of them being powerful Neapolitans who had fled for shelter to the two castles, in the hope that even yet the arrival of a French fleet in the Bay of Naples would revive the fortunes of their republic, and preserve them from the vengeance of the royalists. On receiving Captain Foote's letter of conditions, the French Commandant of the Castle Uovo ordered Captain Oswald to begone with these insulting words, 'Nous voulons la République une et indivisible; nous mourons pour elle. Voilà votre réponse. Eloignez-vous, citoyen;—vite! vite!' These offensive words were communicated to Ruffo by Captain Foote, who at the same time declared his intention of taking prompt measures to teach the Commandant better manners. As Ruffo intimated a cordial approval of Captain Foote's purpose, the latter was not a little surprised to receive on the following day a letter from the Cardinal, requesting him to forbear from attacking the two castles, as negociations were in progress for their surrender. No particulars of these negociations were given to Captain Foote at the time when he was thus ordered to stay his operations. To the British captain's demand for prompt intelligence of what was going forward, Ruffo replied by referring him to Micheroux, the

Russian Minister, who was said to be conducting negociations—a reference which Captain Foote properly put aside with a statement, that he had not been instructed to act with any other person but the Cardinal in matters touching the Sicilian King's interests. On the morrow (the 20th of June, 1799) Captain Foote received from Cardinal Ruffo a draft of the terms for the capitulation of the two castles—terms that had been negociated by the Cardinal terms on which Captain Foote had not been consulted; terms of which the Captain was not permitted to know anything till he saw them in the draft, already signed by His Eminence and the Russian General. To this draft Captain Foote, in his anxiety to do nothing to the prejudice of the Royal cause at so critical a moment, put his signature; but on returning the document to His Eminence, the captain of the *Seahorse* protested against the terms as strangely favourable to the enemy. Had he imagined how greatly Ruffo had exceeded his powers, and violated express orders from the King, Captain Foote unquestionably would have refused to agree to them. Three days later these terms figured in a formal Treaty of Capitulation, dated on the 23rd and signed by Cardinal Ruffo (on the part of the Sicilian King), by the representative of the Emperor of Russia, by the Turkish Commander, and by Captain E. J. Foote, on the part of the King of Great Britain.

What were the terms to which Captain Foote assented, under the impression that Cardinal Ruffo was empowered to grant them to Neapolitan rebels? By the second Article of the Treaty it was provided

t the garrisons should hold possession of the Forts
l the vessels, appointed to transport to Toulon all
ndividuals of the same garrisons wishing to go thither,
hould be ready to sail. By the third Article it was provided that the garrisons should leave the Forts with the honours of war, arms and baggage, drums beating, flags flying, matches lighted, and each with two pieces of cannon. By the fourth Article it was provided that the persons and property of all individuals within the two forts should be respected and guaranteed. By the fifth Article it was provided that all these individuals should, at their choice, have secure transport to Toulon, or the privilege of remaining at Naples, without molestation by the Government, either to themselves or their families. By the sixth Article it was provided that the conditions of the Capitulation should cover 'all persons of both sexes shut up within the forts.' By the seventh Article it was provided that the same conditions should cover 'all the prisoners of the Republican army made by the troops of His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies, or by those of his Allies, in the various encounters that have taken place before the blockade of the Castles.' By the eighth Article it was provided that 'the Signiors the Archbishop of Salerno, De Micheroux de Dillon, and the Bishop of Avellino, detained in the forts, shall be given up to the Commandant of the Fort of St. Elmo, where they shall remain as hostages until notice shall have been received from Toulon that the prisoners sent thither have arrived.'

Bearing in mind that, together with the actual

belligerents, most of whom were Ferdinand's rebellious subjects, the Castles harboured a number of more or less powerful individuals of both sexes, who, being largely accountable for the establishment and most flagitious excesses of the Parthenopeian Republic, had fled to the two castles for immediate protection, and also in the hope of sharing in the favour that might be accorded to the garrisons on their capitulation, readers will see that this marvellous treaty provided for the impunity of numerous individuals who, on the King's restoration, would have no title, or only the faintest possible claim to his merciful consideration. Yet further, the seventh Article provided for the impunity of all prisoners, made either by the King's troops or those of his allies, in the various encounters before the blockade of the Castles. The conditions of the treaty exempted so many rebels from punishment, that, had it been impossible to annul the flagitious instrument, the Government of the restored sovereign could not, with any show of even-handed justice, have proceeded against others of the insurrectionary culprits, whose punishment was required by the interests of the entire state, no less than by the policy of a single party. By exempting so large a number of rebels from the penalties of rebellion, Cardinal Ruffo seems to have aimed at forcing Ferdinand to grant a general amnesty to the Neapolitan Jacobins.

On what authority had the Cardinal taken so great and dangerous a step? It is certain that for thus treating with rebels he had no authority whatever. Yet more, in thus treating with the rebels, he acted in direct and flagrant violation of orders given him

Ferdinand. He had been distinctly instructed t he was *not* to treat with rebels,—a class of enders who, one and all, would be required to surider themselves to law and justice, tempered in me degree by the royal mercy. Under these circumstances, it would be absurd quibbling to argue at in this treaty for the capitulation of two castles, rrisoned chiefly with rebels and swarming with bel civilians, the Cardinal did not exceed his powers cause he negociated it with a French commandant. he order that he should not treat with rebels was n order that he should grant no terms to rebels but hose of unconditional surrender. In granting immunity to the multitude of rebels, male and female, overed by the comprehensive terms of the capitulation, the Cardinal was guilty of an excess of power and disobedience of orders, that deprived the instrument of all obligatory virtue.

It is the doctrine of all jurists that, though obligatory when the parties to their execution have acted *bonâ fide* and within their instructions and powers, capitulations are not binding when they owe their existence to bad faith or excess of authority in the executing parties.* Martens says, 'Capitulations are obligatory,

* Were I to go more fully into this question, I should provoke a charge of diffuseness on matters not strictly pertaining to my subject,—the Story of Lady Hamilton's Life. But readers who onour Nelson, especially those of them who would write justly his doings in 1799, should peruse carefully all the Blackwood sayist (*vide* 'Nelson and Caraccioli,' Blackwood's Magazine, *arch*, 1860) wrote so closely and unanswerably for the vindicaon of the great Admiral's honour seven-and-twenty years since. I knew the essayist's name, I should mention it, with the adiration and gratitude due to the writer who did much to remove e two darkest stains put upon the whiteness of Nelson's fame by outhey's biting and too hasty pen.—J. C. J.

unless the party by whom they are executed has ceeded the limits of the power with which he w entrusted.' Klüber says, 'Capitulations are obligat without acceptance or ratification by the respecti sovereigns, provided that the commanding offic by whom they are signed have acted *bonâ fide*, an not exceeded their instructions, or acted beyond the powers.' That Cardinal Ruffo exceeded his powe and disobeyed his orders in the negociations for th capitulations of the castles is certain. There is al ground for believing him to have been actuated l bad faith. The treaty, therefore, required the sove reign's acceptance for its validity. This ratificatio was refused by the British admiral, who came to th Bay of Naples with powers so comprehensive an absolute as fully to justify the words he wrote fron Malta on the 9th of May, 1800,—'As the whole affair of the Kingdom of Naples were at the time alluded to absolutely placed in my hands, it is I who an called upon to explain my conduct, and therefor send my observations on the infamous armistice entered into by the Cardinal.'

Had the invalid capitulation been acted upon, and had the allied forces actually taken possession of the castles (as Alison erroneously asserts the forces to have done) by virtue of the defective negociations, Nelson, on coming with his armament to Naples would all the same have been justified by the law o nations in setting aside the treaty, provided he ha returned the garrisons to the castles, and placed th forts precisely as they were before the signature o the vain document. But fortunately nothing ha

one under the powers of the treaty, when Nel-
peared on the scene. The time was too short
ch to have been done. After Captain Foote
it on the 23rd of June, 1799, the Deed of
lation, even if Ruffo had not exceeded his
s, would have required for its perfection the
al of the commandant of Fort St. Elmo, who
d to sign it till the following day, possibly
he hoped the French even at the last mo-
uld come to the relief of the forts. If the
dant's dilatoriness was due to this hope, he
ngely disappointed in seeing Nelson's seven-
of the line, instead of a strong fleet tricked
French colours. Anyhow, the two castles had
the losers by the capitulation, but, on the
had escaped a hot bombardment from Cap-
's little squadron, when Nelson came up in
oyant and ordered the flag of truce that was
the *Seahorse* to be hauled down. This was
he 24th June, 1799; on the following day
), Nelson sent the castles a formal ratifica-
annulment of the capitulation; and on the
day on which the evacuation was effected,
bels,' well knowing the unconditional terms
surrender, 'came out of the castles' (to use
s words) 'to be hanged, or otherwise disposed
heir sovereign thought proper.'

he 25th of June (the day before the evacua-
he state cabin of the *Foudroyant* witnessed
ge scene, when Cardinal Ruffo had entered
colloquy with the British admiral. With
vehemence His Eminence threw in steady

stream against the seaman, arguments upon
ments, why the capitulation was a fit, reas
and altogether politic arrangement; why the
litan negociator of the terms should be comm
for keeping well within the limits of his p
why sound policy and royal responsibility wer
urgent on their Sicilian Majesties to regard the
with approval; why, as matters had gone so
was simply impossible to set aside so cleve
rangement, to the inexpressible humiliatio
clever arranger. Of course, each of the C
fervid appeals and each of Nelson's rough a
rejoinders gave work to one or the other of t
preters,—Sir William and Lady Hamilton.
fortunate for the disputants, who talked a
other for two hours, that their warm words
thing of their original fervour in the proces
pretation; for both principals in the wordy
more eager for victory than observant of
In the earlier part of the conference, t
Minister acted as interpreter, till 'vexed and
by the Cardinal's persistence, he begged La
ton to see whether her persuasive voice wo
the Admiral's sentiments more effectual on H
nence. But for once Lady Hamilton addressed
who was alike indifferent to the music and
beauty of her mouth. At length Nelson (*vid*
son's 'Life,' vol. ii, pp. 100) ended the bootl
putation by giving the Cardinal these written
'Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson, who arrived in
of Naples on the 24th of June, with the Briti
found a treaty entered into with the rebels;

he is of opinion, ought not to be carried into execution, without the approbation of his Sicilian Majesty —the Earl of St. Vincent—Lord Keith;' the name of Earl St. Vincent, who had been succeeded by Lord Keith, having been no doubt written inadvertently. On receiving this ultimatum, Cardinal Ruffo could only withdraw from the presence of the Admiral, whose will he had failed to subjugate.

It has been represented by successive writers, that annulling what he used to style the *infamous* treaty, British Admiral was animated by ferocious nity towards the rebels, and a miserable desire fy Lady Hamilton's thirst for the blood of the who had driven her 'adorable Queen' from That writers of ability and moral worth Nelson in this manner shows that men of not exempt from the passions and infirmities cated people. Nelson's motives and purpose business were wholly pure of the inhuman and ignoble meanness thus charged against lis mission in the Mediterranean was to proeir Sicilian Majesties from France, and in way to weaken the French. From first to last the first sowing of the sentiments which had d the Neapolitans for the revolution, to the t of Championet's triumph—the establishment arthenopeian Republic was the work of the To the last moment of its existence, the c owed its life to France. On the 24th of Naples was still in the hands of the masters of the forts commanding the or weeks and months been looking for

the arrival of the French fleet, that would make the Republican cause stronger than it had ever been in Southern Italy. The moment had now arrived for Nelson to extinguish the Parthenopeian government and restore the Monarchy; and he was determined to accomplish this work in the way that would be most injurious to France. In bringing Ferdinand and Maria Caroline back to Naples, he was set on restoring them under conditions that would enable them to rule the country with a firm hand. Th[illegible] they should so rule the country, it was necessary [illegible] them to have a perfect command of the F[illegible] faction. By taking from their Majesties tho[illegible] of dealing effectually with this faction, Ruf[illegible] with the rebels would enable the very s[illegible] politans, who had planted the French in [illegible] renew their intrigues with Paris, and rep[illegible] endeavours for the destruction of the m[illegible] Hence Nelson's promptitude in annulling the i[illegible] compact, which favoured France in propor[illegible] it was hostile to the only policy that coul[illegible] the Sicilies a stable government. Setting i[illegible] as an arrangement hostile to the interests [illegible] King and Queen whom he had been orde[illegible] protect, he set it aside, also, as an arrangemen[illegible] ously favourable to those French interests, wl[illegible] had been appointed to combat and destroy.

The points for the reader to notice most pa[illegible] ly are, (1) that the instrument of capitulation [illegible] completed till the 24th of June; (2) that [illegible] day of its completion, the people in t[illegible] knew of its annulment, from the disappe[illegible]

flag of truce; (3) that formal notice of the annulment was sent to the two castles on the 25th of June; (4) that, between the execution of the treaty and the formal notice of its nullification, no action affecting the *status quo* of the castles had been taken in consequence of the capitulation; and (5) that, when the rebels came out of the castles on the 26th of June, they came out with the knowledge, that they were surrendering themselves unconditionally to their sovereign. These five points are facts of unqualified historic certainty. Yet Southey, writing at a time when he should have known better, says in his 'Life of Nelson,'

'A flag of truce was flying on the castles, and on board the *Seahorse*. Nelson made a signal to annul the treaty, declaring he would grant rebels no other terms than those of unconditional submission. The cardinal objected to this; *nor could all the arguments of Nelson, Sir William Hamilton, and Lady Hamilton, who took an active part in the conference, convince him that a treaty of such a nature, solemnly concluded, could honourably be set aside.* He retired at last, silenced by Nelson's authority, but not convinced. Captain Foote was sent out of the bay; and *the garrisons taken out of the castles, under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect*, were delivered over as rebels to the vengeance of the Sicilian court.—A deplorable transaction! a stain upon the memory of Nelson, and the honour of England! *To palliate it would be in vain, to justify it would be wicked:* there is no alternative for one who will not make himself a participator in guilt, *but to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and with shame.*'

In this way is popular biography written. To occasion an inference favourable to the assertion that Nelson abrogated the deed of capitulation in servile deference to Lady Hamilton's wishes, Southey says

she took an active part in the conference, and also in *the arguments*, which failed to persuade Cardinal Ruffo that the treaty was to be honourably set aside. Lady Hamilton's only part in the conference was that of an interpreter. She had no share in the arguments, which turned chiefly on certain principles and rules of international law. By this time, the readers of this book are in a position to judge for themselves whether Lady Hamilton was likely to take a principal's part in the discussion, and whether at such a moment and on such matters her husband and Nelson would have let her play the part of a prattling simpleton. What was required of her, she could do, and doubtless did, excellently well. When her husband's voice and energy failed, she translated alternately Nelson's words into Italian, and Ruffo's words into English.

Had Southey known aught of the principles and rules, deciding the question whether the capitulation could be honourably set aside, he would not have made himself ridiculous by suggesting that the question could only be answered with the negative.

In saying that the garrisons were 'taken out of the castles, *under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect*,' Southey made a definite statement that has not a single thread of truth in it. As Southey was an honest and conscientious man, though a self-conceited creature, it may be assumed confidently that he wrote the false words in absolute ignorance of their falseness. But, as he could have got at the truth with very little trouble, he must be held gravely culpable in adopting another writer's misstatement

on so grave a subject without taking ordinary pains to test the erroneous averment.

It *would be vain to palliate* a crime that was never committed. As the rebels were *not* 'taken out of the castles, under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect,' Nelson's admirers are not tempted to be guilty of the wickedness of justifying what never took place. Southey was strangely in error when he imagined that the only course open to him was 'to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and shame,' as a true story. Robert Southey would have taken another and very different course had he written his popular story of Nelson's 'Life' with proper circumspection. He would have called the disgraceful story a monstrous untruth, and warned his readers not to believe a word of it. Were it not so irritating, exasperating, maddening, the notion of Southey (with a nature as far beneath Nelson's nature as earth is lower than heaven) speaking of Nelson's doings with sorrow and *shame* (*!*) would be comical. When Southey (a good and clever man, be it ever remembered, though a self-conceited creature) was writing of Nelson in this strain of stern and condescending severity, he little knew with what sorrow and shame (for the writer) his words would be read in coming time.

Unfortunately for Nelson's reputation, Southey was so able a writer and so fine a literary artist, that whatever he wrote for general readers never failed to be popular. And of all the numerous productions of his versatile pen, the 'Life of Nelson,' based on his *Quarterly* article, is the book which he was desirous of rendering acceptable to the entire reading public.

Designed for universal favour, it achieved its purpose. For every copy that has been sold of any of the other biographies of the great Admiral, twenty copies have been sold of Southey's delightful 'Life of Nelson.' Moreover, whilst enjoying the highest reputation for careful research and conscientious exactness, Southey, even when writing with only a superficial knowledge of his subject, spoke with a certain air of justifiable authoritativeness that seldom failed to win the confidence of critical writers. Hence it came to pass that, whilst his 'Life of Nelson' has been devoured by hundreds of thousands, even by millions, of hasty readers, its several serious errors have been adopted as sure truths by grave and usually careful historians. The injury, therefore, done to Nelson's fame by the most popular of his biographers has been deplorably great.

To pass from the misleading biographer to one of the general historians whom he misled in respect to the capitulation of the two castles, Nuovo and Uovo.

'Whether' (says Alison, *vide* 'History of Europe,' vol. iv, pp. 89—91) 'the capitulation should or should not have been granted, is a different and irrelevant question. Suffice it to say that it had taken place, *and that, in virtue of its provisions, the Allied powers had gained possession of the castles of Naples* . . . . In every point of view, therefore, the conduct of Nelson in this tragic affair was inexcusable; his biographer may perhaps with justice ascribe it to the fatal ascendency of female fascination, but the historian, who has the interests of humanity and the cause of justice to support, can admit of no such alleviation, and will best discharge his duty by imitating the conduct of his eloquent annalist, and with shame acknowledging the disgraceful deeds.'

That Alison's erroneous view of the capitulation

of the castles, and of Prince Caracciolo's fate, was mainly, if not altogether, due to Southey's influence, appears not only from the way in which the historian weaves into his text the words of the eloquent annalist, but also from the fact that, in a marginal note, he names Southey as his leading authority for his misstatements and misjudgments.

At the close of this chapter, a few words should appear in grateful commendation of a naval officer to whose fame pertains the proud distinction of having been the first Englishman to use pen and ink for the vindication of Nelson's honour, in respect to proceedings which, according to Southey and Alison, admitted of no apology. After referring to the errors committed by Southey, James, Brenton, Alison, and Colletta in their accounts of Nelson's conduct in the Bay of Naples in 1799, Sir Harris Nicolas (*vide* 'Dispatches and Letters,' vol. *iii*, p. 520) speaks with fit commendation of the 'little tract, entitled "Vindication of Admiral Lord Nelson's Proceedings in the Bay of Naples," in which the late Commander Jeaffreson Miles exposed most of the errors of the writers, who have been alluded to, with much ability.' In his remarks on this spirited and trenchant brochure, which appeared in 1843, just two years before the publication of the third volume of 'Dispatches and Letters,' Sir Harris says, with equal warmth and justice, 'Commander Miles's book did him the more honour, as it was the *first* and then the *only* attempt to stem the torrent of abuse against Lord Nelson, by endeavouring to place the transactions at Naples in a favourable point of view.' The sailor

who thus honourably distinguished himself amongst writers about Nelson, at a time when it was the fashion to decry the great Admiral for crimes he never committed, was a descendant of Jeaffreson Miles, of the Tower of London, *temp.* George II.

CHAPTER IV.

PRINCE CARACCIOLO.

The Prince's Career—Commodore and Courtier, he turns Patriot—His Employment under the Parthenopeian Republic—Troubridge's Belief in the Traitor's Loyalty—Nelson declines to think Caracciolo a Jacobin—Nelson and Troubridge discover their Mistake—The Prince in open Rebellion—His last Efforts for the Republic—A Reward offered for his Apprehension—He flies to the Mountains—Is taken in the Disguise of a Peasant—Prisoner on board the *Foudroyant*—His Trial, Sentence and Execution—Nelson's Mercy to the Culprit—Slanders on Nelson—Calumnies on Lady Hamilton—Southey's Malice—Alison's Carelessness—Brenton's big Blunder—Slaughter of the Slanders—Maria Caroline's Correspondence with Lady Hamilton—Southey's vile Questions—An Answer for Each of them—The Corsican's Spite—His Palliation of Perfidy and Murder.

1799 A.D.

FOR the accomplishment of his task, it is necessary that Lady Hamilton's biographer should say something of Prince Francesco Caracciolo (or Caraccioli, as his name is spelt by some writers), who stands forth in Neapolitan annals as one of the meanest miscreants ever rated with men of honour and martyrs for liberty by fanciful and misinformed idolaters.

Born of a noble family, the son of a statesman who had been Viceroy of Sicily, this miserable man entered the Sicilian navy in his earlier time, and

had attained to honour and a commodore's rank (and even—*vide* Harrison's 'Life of Nelson'—to 'the supreme command of the small remains of His Sicilian Majesty's Fleet'), when, after passing many years in the service of the Crown to which his allegiance was due, he committed the crimes that brought him to an ignominious death. So long as Ferdinand flourished, this martyr for liberty, as he has been styled, was the King's apparently devoted servant, and one of Maria Caroline's courtly worshippers. But, when Ferdinand fell into misfortune, he deserted his master at the moment when the royal reverses appeared irreparable. The hour came for him to charge Ferdinand with base desertion of his faithful subjects, in flying like a coward to Sicily, and with squandering in luxurious ease at Palermo the money that should have been spent on Mack's soldiers. These charges were not absolutely groundless. But so long as Ferdinand remained sovereign of the Two Sicilies, and likely to survive his troubles, Prince Caracciolo was the King's man. Aiding the King to desert his subjects, the Prince attended the court to Palermo, where he lived like the other courtiers. It was not till the Lazzaroni had been slaughtered by thousands, Championet had made himself master of Naples, and the Parthenopeian Republic had been established with a show of enduring success, that Caracciolo awoke to his master's depravity, and discovered the beauty and eternal truth of republican principles. On hearing that the new Republic had published an edict for the confiscation of the estates of all Neapolitan absentees, who should

not return to Naples by a certain date, the Prince, who had considerable possessions in the capital, determined to be a virtuous patriot, and to sacrifice his position at court—for the sacred cause of Divine Liberty. His way of retiring from Palermo was characteristic of the man. The rat determined to quit the apparently sinking ship, under cover of the captain's permission to leave it; so that, in case the ship after all should not sink, he might have a chance of returning to the vessel from which he had withdrawn, on regular leave of absence. Approaching the sovereign, on whom he made war a few weeks later, Caracciolo begged for leave to go to Naples, so as to comply with the recent edict, and preserve his estate in the capital. Made at such a moment, the request must at least have shown Ferdinand that he did not possess the whole of the commodore's heart. The leave was granted; but, together with the permission, Caracciolo received from the King a significant hint to be careful what he was after. Telling the commodore to 'beware of intermeddling with French politics,' Ferdinand added, 'Avoid the snares of the Republicans. I know I shall recover the kingdom of Naples.'

At no long interval from his departure for Naples, the news came to Palermo (in a letter dated by Troubridge to Nelson on 9th of April, 1799) that Caracciolo was serving the Republic as a common soldier, having refused higher service, from a sentiment of fealty to his sovereign. 'I believe,' wrote Troubridge, who was slow to think Caracciolo a traitor, 'they force every-one to do duty in militia.'

Four days later, Troubridge learnt that Caracciolo had risen at a leap from the position of a common soldier to the supreme command of the Parthenopeian Marine. 'I enclose your lordship,' Troubridge wrote to Nelson on the 13th of April, 'one of Caracciolo's letters, as head of the marine. I hope he has been forced into this measure.' Too honourable himself to believe readily in another man's baseness, Troubridge still clung to the hope that, in spite of ugly facts, Caracciolo would be found trusty and leal. 'Caraccioli,' he wrote to Nelson on the 19th of April, 'I am assured by all the sailors, is not a Jacobin, but forced to act as he does. They sign his name to printed papers without his authority, as they have, in my opinion, the Archbishop's.' Nelson also took Troubridge's charitable view of Caracciolo's suspicious conduct, as long as it was possible for him to hold it. 'Many of the principal Jacobins have fled,' Nelson wrote to Earl Spencer so late as the 26th of April, 'and Caraccioli has resigned his situation as Head of the Marine. This man was fool enough to quit his master when he thought his case desperate; yet, in his heart, I believe he is no Jacobin.'

But even the generous Troubridge was constrained to think Caracciolo a Jacobin and scoundrel, on receiving conclusive evidence that he was both. On the 1st of May, Captain Troubridge wrote to Nelson, 'Caraccioli, I am now satisfied, is a Jacobin. I inclose you one of his letters. He came in the gunboats to Castel à Mare himself, and spirited up the Jacobins.' At the close of the same month, Captain Foote, then senior naval officer off Naples, wrote to

Nelson, 'Caraccioli threatens a second attack, with a considerable addition of force.' In June, Caracciolo was actively employed against his sovereign's forces and the troops of his sovereign's allies. In that month his gun-boats fired at the town of Annunciata and the adjacent houses, and also upon Ruffo's 'Christians' and the Russians, when the allied troops captured the fort of Villerna and the bridge of Magdalena. He also fired on the Sicilian frigate *Minerva*, the vessel which he had himself commanded in former time. Thus active against his Sovereign and the allied forces, Caracciolo made no use of his repeated opportunities for escaping from his military confederates, and joining the forces he had opposed so energetically. Southey himself admits, that the Prince had these opportunities, and neglected to use them, as he would have done had he been acting under compulsion. 'The sailors,' says Southey, 'reported that he was forced to act thus; and this was believed, till it was seen that he directed ably the offensive operations of the revolutionists, and did not avail himself of opportunities for escaping when they offered.'

Fighting against his king thus desperately in the earlier weeks of June, soon after the middle of the month the wretched man thought only for his own personal safety. At first he took refuge either in the Castle Nuovo or the Castle Uovo; but quitting the Castle *before the 23rd of June*, so that his case was in no way affected either by the Capitulation or its annulment, he retired to Calviranno, whence he wrote to the Duke of Calviranno at Portici, imploring the

Duke to make representations in his behalf to Cardinal Ruffo. Whether this letter had any consequences does not appear. Busy just then about the negociations for the abortive capitulation, Ruffo may have wanted both inclination and time to give particular attention to Caracciolo's case. Possibly the Cardinal never heard of the Prince's prayer to him for protection, because the Duke did not care to compromise himself by showing any concern for the fate of a traitor so little deserving of mercy. Getting no sufficient promise of protection from either the Duke or the Cardinal, Caracciolo, for whose apprehension a reward had been offered, fled to the mountains, where he was hunted out and discovered under the disguise of a peasant. Within twelve hours of his capture, the wretched caitiff was hanging at the end of a rope.

Carried straight, from the place where he was taken, to the British Admiral's flag-ship, the culprit may well have been regarded with pity no less than with abhorrence, by the officers who received him on board the *Foudroyant*. Haggard from care and hunger, the short, thick-set man wore on his countenance a look of stern resolve, whose promise was not fulfilled during his few remaining hours. With characteristic humanity Captain Hardy ordered that the prisoner should be liberated from his bonds and be offered food and drink. Probably Nelson had been forewarned of the incident, which was followed in less than one hour by the assembly of a court-martial of Sicilian officers. Anyhow, as a reward had been offered for the Prince's capture, Nelson may be assumed to have considered before the morning of

the 29th of June what he should do, if Caracciolo should be captured and brought alive to his presence. This assumption is countenanced by the promptitude with which Nelson issued this warrant,—

'To Count Thurn, Commodore and Commander of His Sicilian Majesty's Frigate *La Minerva*.—By Horatio Lord Nelson, &c. &c. &c. . . . Whereas Francisco Caracciolo, a Commodore in the service of his Sicilian Majesty, has been taken, and stands accused of rebellion against his lawful Sovereign, and for firing at his colours hoisted on board his frigate the *Minerva*, under your command, you are, therefore, hereby required and directed to assemble five of the senior officers under your command, yourself presiding, and proceed to inquire whether the crime with which the said Francisco Caracciolo stands charged, can be proved against him; and if the charge is proved, you are to report to me what punishment he ought to suffer.—Given on board the *Foudroyant*, Naples Bay, the 29th June, 1799. NELSON.'

Caracciolo having been brought on board the *Foudroyant* at 9 a.m., the court-martial created by this warrant opened its proceedings at 10 a.m., and closed them after a sitting of two hours. The sitting, no doubt, was short, but it was quite long enough for the necessities of the case. The indictment comprised only two counts,—the general charge of rebellion, and the particular charge of firing on the *Minerva*. The court consisted of the six senior officers of the *Minerva*, some of whom, and probably all, were eye-witnesses of the particular offence. To establish such a charge, to such a court, there was no need for the elaborate examination and cross-examination of numerous witnesses. The prisoner, indeed, was in the position of a murderer, taken not only red-handed, but in the very act of plunging the

knife into his victim's heart. Against the witnesses who saw him commit the particular offence he could not allege that, if he were given time, he could produce witnesses to show he had not done what the judges themselves knew him to have done. Proved so readily and surely, the particular charge on its establishment was of itself sufficient evidence of the general charge of rebellion. The prisoner had not the hardihood to deny the charges of rebelling and firing on the *Minerva*. From the two different accounts of his defence—accounts which, though inconsistent in details, are not contradictory on the main points—it appears that, whilst admitting himself guilty of the offences, he palliated and even tried to justify his guilt by arguing that he was constrained against his will to rebel by the strong pressure put upon him by the Parthenopeian Government, and by the overpowering strength of his natural desire to preserve his estate for the benefit of his family. Though loyal at heart, he had rebelled because the Republican Government had made it so well worth his while to be a rebel, and because he was animated by a strong affection for the members of his family. As he had to choose between serving the republic as a common soldier, in which capacity he could not have done the King much harm, and serving the republic as Commander-in-chief of the Navy, he was not to be severely judged for accepting the more honourable and profitable post. Rebellion, in the case of a man who could enrich his family by it, was far less reprehensible than rebellion, in the case of a man who took nothing more than hard usage and

bare subsistence. Naturally the judges were of one mind that they could not acquit the prisoner of the crimes (which he admitted himself to have perpetrated), simply because he could declare on his honour that it was, under the circumstances of the case, convenient and profitable for him to commit them.

For what is known of the most offensive part of Caracciolo's speech in justification of his treason, readers are indebted to Lieutenant Parsons, Nelson's signal-mate, who (*vide* 'Nelsonian Reminiscences') reports him to have spoken to the following effect,—

'I am accused of deserting my King in distress, and leaguing with his enemies. The accusation is so far false that the King deserted me and all his faithful subjects. It is well known to you, gentlemen, that our frontier was covered by an army under General Mack, superior to the advancing enemy, and you are aware that the sinews of war is money. The King collected every thing that could be converted into specie, on pretence of paying that army, embarked it in his Britannic Majesty's ship *Vanguard*, even to the enormous amount of 500 casks, and fled with it to Palermo, there to riot in luxurious safety. Who was then the traitor—the King or myself? After such uncalled for, and, I must say, cowardly desertion by the sovereign, Mack's army disbanded for want of pay, and the French army occupied Naples. It is known to you, gentlemen, that my patrimonial possessions lay in the city, and that my family is large. If I had not succumbed to the ruling power, my children would have been vagabonds in the land of their fathers. Gentlemen, some of you are parents, and I appeal to your feelings; let each of you place yourselves in my situation, and say how you would have acted; but I think my destruction is predetermined, and this Court anything but a Court of Justice. If I am right, my blood be upon your heads and those of your children.'

Of course this report must be read as nothing more than a summary of the more noteworthy passages of the prisoner's speech. Composed probably from memory, instead of from notes taken at the moment, the report may be erroneous in some particulars. But there is no reason to doubt its substantial accuracy.

After hearing the defence, which was a confession of the general charge, attended with seditious and malignant reflections on the King, and reviewing the evidence of matters that were affairs of their own personal knowledge, the judges were of one opinion that the prisoner was guilty. It was impossible for honest men to come to any other conclusion. The sentence, delivered by Commodore Count Thurn, was to this effect,—

'Admiral Prince Caracciolo, you have been unanimously found guilty of the charges brought against you; you have repaid the high rank and honours conferred on you by a mild and confiding Sovereign, with the blackest ingratitude. The sentence of the Court is, that you shall be hanged by the neck at the yard-arm of your own flag-ship, in two hours from this time, and may God have mercy on your soul.'

Delivered at or shortly after 12 a.m., this sentence was followed quickly by the issue of this mandate for the execution, addressed to Count Thurn, under Nelson's sign-manual:—

'To Commodore Count Thurn, Commander of His Sicilian Majesty's ship, *La Minerva*.—By Horatio Lord Nelson, &c. Whereas a Board of Naval Officers of his Sicilian Majesty hath been assembled to try Francisco Caracciolo for rebellion against his lawful Sovereign, and for firing at his Sicilian Majesty's frigate, *La Minerva*. And whereas, the said Board of Naval Officers have found the

charge of rebellion fully proved against him, and have sentenced the said Caracciolo to suffer death; you are hereby required and directed to cause the said sentence of death to be carried into execution upon the said Francisco Caracciolo accordingly, by hanging him at the fore-yard arm of his Sicilian Majesty's frigate *La Minerva*, under your command, at five o'clock this evening; and to cause him to hang there until sunset, when you will have his body cut down, and thrown into the sea.

'NELSON.

'Given on board the *Foudroyant*,
'Naples Bay, June 29th, 1799.'

It is worthy of observation that, whilst ordering the sentence of the court-martial to be carried out exactly in every other particular, Nelson exercised his prerogative of mercy so far as to extend the prisoner's life by something like three hours. The sentence, delivered at twelve a.m., was that the Prince should be hanged 'at two hours from this time,' *i.e.*, at two p.m. The British admiral ordered that the culprit should be allowed to live till five p.m. To estimate this merciful concession rightly, readers must remember that, as a Catholic, Caracciolo belonged to a church whose members set great value on the last offices of religion, and prize more highly than Protestants the last hours permitted to them for religious exercises, before they pass from time to eternity. As much has been urged to Nelson's discredit about the indecency, with which he hurried on the execution, this fact deserves consideration. In ordering the sentence to be carried into effect on the day of its delivery, Nelson only held to the usual practice of the British Navy when on active service. The mutineers of the *St. George*, off Cadiz, would

have died on the evening of their conviction, had not their trial lasted till after sunset. That being so, they were hanged on the following day, though it was Sunday, and Earl St. Vincent demanded the immediate recall of Vice-Admiral Thompson, for having ventured to express disapproval of his lordship's conduct in ordering the mutineers to be executed on a Sunday.

Unfortunately for Nelson's fame, the opponents of the English government, in their sympathy with revolutionary sentiments and persons, thought right to assail the British admiral for his politic and altogether praiseworthy measures for driving the French from Naples and extinguishing the Parthenopeian Republic. When Fox, without naming Nelson, had pelted the officers of the British fleet with odious charges, that were rightly taken by the politician's admirers and opponents as reflections on the admiral, scribblers of both sexes lost no time in doing their utmost to persuade the public that the bright and spotless hero of the Nile was a monster of perfidious meanness and cruelty. Treacherous and barbarous in annulling the unauthorized treaty for the capitulation of the castles, he was guilty of sheer, cold-blooded murder in the execution of Caracciolo. These were the charges brought against the truthful, humane, and chivalric Admiral by slanderous journalists and book-makers. Averring that Nelson had no lawful authority to send Caracciolo before a court-martial of Sicilian officers, these people insisted that he had murdered Caracciolo from no other motive than a desire to please the wicked Lady Hamilton, who thirsted for the patriot's

blood, because he had exposed Ferdinand's crimes and Maria Caroline's infamy, and done his utmost to replace their atrocious despotism with a virtuous form of government.

To show how the British flag had been dishonoured by the Admiral, it was declared by the Admiral's slanderers that he had hung the virtuous Caracciolo at the yard-arm of the *Foudroyant*, and then thrown his body from the deck of the *Foudroyant* into the sea. To put it beyond question that Lady Hamilton's nature was chiefly remarkable for ferocious vindictiveness, these same artists in calumny told how she was present at Caracciolo's execution, and witnessed with fiendish delight the death-throes of the strangled martyr; and how, not content with witnessing this hideous spectacle, she insisted an hour or so later that Nelson should take her out in his barge, in order that she might have another good look at the Prince's body, still dangling at the yard-arm of the *Minerva*.

Like the fabrications touching the capitulation, these slanderous fictions touching Caracciolo's fate and the pleasure it afforded Lady Hamilton, were adopted with variations, and sometimes with the latest improvements by writers, whose credit with the public caused the scandalous tales to be generally accepted for sure and indisputably veracious history. Southey, Brenton, and Alison were only three of many writers who were guilty of this wrong to a woman, whose gravest errors are entitled to charitable consideration, and to the great Admiral whose honour should be dear to every Englishman. Suggesting that she hid herself from the lieutenant,

who would fain have induced her to entreat Nelson to commute in Caracciolo's favour the sentence of death by the rope to the less ignominious sentence of death by shooting, Southey says, 'As a last hope, Caracciolo asked the lieutenant if he thought an application to Lady Hamilton would be beneficial? Parkinson went to seek her. *She was not to be seen on this occasion,—but she was present at the execution.*' The statement that she was a witness of the execution is wholly and absolutely untrue. If she refused to see the lieutenant because she knew he wanted her to interfere in a matter wholly outside of her official province, Lady Hamilton showed her good sense, and was guilty of nothing worse than womanly decorum. But, though he dared not say it outright, Southey had the baseness to insinuate that she kept out of the way because she was desirous of seeing the Prince killed in the most ignominious manner.

Following carelessly in Southey's track, Alison says of Caracciolo's fate,

'He was betrayed by a domestic and brought on board the British Admiral's flag-ship. A naval court-martial was there immediately summoned, composed of Neapolitan officers, by whom he was condemned to death. In vain the old* man entreated that he might be shot, and not die the death of a malefactor; his prayers were disregarded, and, after being strangled by the executioners, he was thrown into the sea. Before night his body was seen erect in the waves from the middle upwards, as if he had risen from the deep to reproach the English hero with his unworthy fate.'

* To provoke pity for Caracciolo, it was the practice of the false scribes to represent that he was an *old* man,—seventy or over seventy years *old*. His age at the time of his death was forty-seven.

Here we have Sir Archibald Alison representing that the Prince was executed on the Admiral's flagship (viz., the *Foudroyant*), and thrown from that ship into the sea; and that, before the night of the day on which he was executed, his body was seen erect in the waves from the middle upwards. Though Sir Archibald gives Southey as his chief authority for these mis-statements, it is only fair to the biographer to say he should not be held accountable for the historian's errors, so far as this extract is concerned. Southey is quite clear that Caracciolo was hung at the fore-yard-arm of the *Minerva*, and that his body was thrown from that vessel into the sea. Southey is no less clear that the apparition of the Prince's body was no incident of the day on which he was executed, but an event of 'between two and three weeks afterwards.' Thus inexactly have the stories about Nelson been passed on from one writer to another, the comparatively true stories growing less truthful, and the false stories more wildly fabulous in each transmission.

The story of Lady Hamilton wishing for 'another look at poor Caracciolo' was given in Captain Brenton's 'Naval History of Great Britain from 1783 to 1822,' with improvements that may perhaps be assigned to the captain's peculiar taste and fancy.

> At the last fatal scene (says the Captain) she [*i.e.*, Lady Hamilton] was present, and seems to have enjoyed the sight. While the body was yet hanging at the yard-arm of the frigate, 'Come,' said she, 'come, Brontë, let us take the barge and have another look at poor Caracciolo!' The barge was manned, and they rowed round the frigate, and satiated their eyes with the appalling spectacle.

It was thus, according to the imaginative author of the 'Naval History,' that Lady Hamilton used to address Nelson, more than six weeks before he was created Duke of Brontë. Scarcely had the 'Naval History' appeared, when one of its indignant readers —John Mitford, a man well qualified to speak to the point, for he was one of the survivors of Nelson's sea-mates—wrote to the *Morning Post*, denying the story in forcible terms. The Captain hoped to put himself right with the public by announcing, in the second edition of the 'Naval History,' that his critic 'lodged over a coal-shed in some obscure street, near Leicester Square.' But, as the Blackwood essayist (*vide* 'Blackwood's Magazine' April, 1860) justly remarked, it still remained for Captain Brenton to show *why* John Mitford was unable to tell the truth, because he had a cheap lodging near Leicester Square. In course of time John Mitford's evidence was confirmed by a witness to whose social condition even Captain Brenton could not take exception. 'Commodore Sir Augustus Collier,' says the Blackwood essayist, 'a most distinguished officer, who was on board the *Foudroyant* at the time, has, in manly and emphatic words, denounced the whole story as "an arrant falsehood."' Another person, not to be suspected of lodging over a coal-shed near Leicester Square, also had good grounds for knowing and declaring the falseness of the story that Lady Hamilton was a witness of Caracciolo's execution. Lord Northwick dined with Nelson and Lady Hamilton in Nelson's cabin on board the *Foudroyant* on the 29th of June, and was so dining with them when they heard the

gun which announced the Prince's execution at the yard-arm of the Sicilian frigate. Lady Hamilton, therefore, cannot have been a witness of the hanging. If, at any moment between five p.m. and sunset, she and Nelson left the *Foudroyant* in the barge to take a look at poor Caracciolo, their guest must have known it. The whole story is one monstrous lie, made up of several lies; yet it figures as truth in serious histories. How a naval officer, so honourably remembered as Brenton for his professional services, his benevolence, and his ability in letters, could have believed so monstrous and manifest a lie—a lie that, were it truth, would prove the noble and humane Nelson a creature to be abhorred by generous men of every social degree,—is a puzzle.

Even worse stories of Lady Hamilton's doings in Italy might be raked from scandalous literature. But I forbear for obvious reasons to rake together the revolting inventions in order to show how, whilst some of them contradict and disprove one another, all of them should be disbelieved. It is better to leave them between the covers of the forgotten volumes, where the curious may find them. It is another thing to explode the poisonous fictions that have been adopted by writers of credit. The readers of this book, however, may be assured that, whenever and wherever they come upon an anecdote which exhibits Lady Hamilton as a revoltingly cruel or in any way an incredibly wicked woman, the anecdote is one of the wild lies which the present writer declines to touch.

That Maria Caroline did not regard Lady Hamilton

as a woman who would gloat with fiendish delight on the Prince's corpse, appears from the letter Her Majesty wrote to the British Minister's wife on Tuesday, the 2nd of July, 1799, immediately after receiving her account of Caracciolo's execution. 'My dear Lady,' the Queen wrote, 'I received with great pleasure your kind and obliging letters, three of Saturday and one of Friday, with the list of the Jacobins who are some of the vilest we have had. I have seen also the sad and merited end of the unfortunate and mad-brained Caracciolo. I am sensible how much your excellent heart must have suffered, which increases my sense of gratitude to you.' It is well for the reader to observe the dates of the letters to which the Queen refers. On Friday, the 28th of June, Lady Hamilton dated an epistle to Maria Caroline, containing a list of Jacobins. On the following day (Saturday, the 29th of June, the day of Caracciolo's trial and death), Lady Hamilton wrote the Queen no less than three letters. How she spent her time, whilst, according to her slanderers, she was keeping out of the way in order to avoid a petition that she would mediate between the condemned culprit and Nelson, is therefore fully accounted for. She was writing to Maria Caroline. In what vein she wrote to the Queen about Caracciolo may be inferred confidently from Her Majesty's words, 'I am sensible how your excellent heart must have suffered, which increases my sense of gratitude to you.' Instead of inferring, from Lady Hamilton's letters, that in Naples Bay she was experiencing excitement congenial to a breast stirred by fiendish vindictiveness

against the Jacobins, Maria Caroline realized from those epistles how distressing to Lady Hamilton's 'excellent heart' was the position in which she had been placed.

Something more must be said of Southey's misrepresentations of the circumstances of Caracciolo's trial and death. The biographer says of those circumstances:

'Here, also, a faithful historian is called upon to pronounce a severe and unqualified condemnation of Nelson's conduct. Had he the authority of his Sicilian Majesty for proceeding as he did? If not, why was not the authority produced? Why was the trial precipitated so that it was impossible for the prisoner, if he had been innocent, to provide the witnesses who might have proved him so? Why was a second trial refused, when the known animosity of the president of the court against the prisoner was considered? Why was the execution hastened so as to preclude any appeal for mercy, and render the prerogative of mercy useless? Doubtless, the British admiral seemed to himself to be acting under a rigid sense of justice; but, to all other persons, it was obvious that he was influenced by an infatuated attachment, a baneful passion, which destroyed his domestic happiness, and now, in a second instance, stained ineffaceably his public character.'

Southey never penned anything more discreditable to an eminent man of letters than this passage, with its string of maliciously suggestive and misdirecting questions, in which he showed himself a consummate master of the vile art of insinuating charges which he knew he could not substantiate, and therefore craftily refrained from making in direct terms. Let us examine the string of slanderous questions.

'Had he the authority of his Sicilian Majesty for proceeding as he did?'—an insinuation that Nelson

compassed Caracciolo's death by unauthorized and unlawful means, and therefore murdered him. Whilst there is not even a shadow of a reason for thinking that in this business Nelson exceeded, there is redundant testimony that he acted within the limits of, the powers accorded to him by Ferdinand. When Nelson entered the Bay of Naples on June 24, 1799, he was invested with the powers of supreme commander of the Sicilian marine, no less than of the British ships operating for the reduction of Naples. He was also invested with larger powers, most likely with unlimited powers, by Ferdinand. Of these larger powers the particulars have not been given precisely. It is conceivable they were never put in writing; but, if they were not set forth in a formal commission, they were none the less valid. Royal commissions of the largest kind may be only verbal, though for the security of both the grantor and grantee of the committed authority it is usual to express their limits precisely in a carefully drawn and solemnly sealed document. It may be imprudent for an officer to act by virtue of a mere verbal commission; but in morals and honour he is as fully bound and justified by a verbal as by a written commission. That Nelson was capable of acting on Ferdinand's mere word-of-mouth instructions, we know by the way in which he exercised the power of the supreme Sicilian commander of the naval expedition against Naples, and instructed Troubridge to take measures for the recovery of the islands two full days before the authorizing letter of instructions was signed and

sealed by Ferdinand. That the British admiral had authority to send Caracciolo for trial before a court-martial of Sicilian officers appears from the way in which his warrant was obeyed. Count Thurn obeyed the warrant without questioning its validity. The other senior officers of the *Minerva* did likewise, in perfect confidence that Nelson had authority to order the trial. Prince Caracciolo himself recognized the legality of the tribunal before which he was brought. Admitting the sufficiency of the tribunal by pleading before it in his own behalf, he again recognized Nelson's authority to convene the court by petitioning the British admiral to grant him another trial before another court-martial, sitting under a president less hostile to him than Count Thurn. How could either the officers who composed the court, or the prisoner whom they tried, entertain a doubt of Nelson's authority for calling the court, when they knew him to be in supreme command of His Sicilian Majesty's fleet? Six weeks later, Ferdinand in a most emphatic manner declared his approval of and gratitude for Nelson's conduct in this and every other affair, for the reduction of Naples, by making him a Sicilian duke, and giving him a considerable estate. Southey knew that the King, Count Thurn, the other senior officers of the *Minerva*, and Caracciolo himself were one and all witnesses to the legality of Nelson's proceedings. Yet he could insinuate that, by acting on insufficient authority, Nelson had murdered the prince in order to gratify Lady Hamilton.

'If so, why was not the authority produced?' Be-

cause the authority, known to every officer of the Sicilian fleet, was never questioned by any person concerned in the trial.

'If not, why were the proceedings hurried on without it?' The suggestive 'if not' may be struck out, because it stands out on the record in black and white, that Nelson had the requisite authority from his Sicilian Majesty. Instead of being hurried on without the authority, the proceedings were carried out with all proper deliberation and regard for forms, in accordance with the authority.

'Why was the trial precipitated, so that it was impossible for the prisoner, if he had been innocent, to provide the witnesses who might have proved him so?' There was no doubt of the prisoner's guilt. His judges had themselves seen him in rebellion, and seen him fire on their ship. Prince Caracciolo admitted his guilt, and only ventured to plead, in extenuation of his crime, that he had been strongly tempted to rebel before he yielded to the temptation.

'Why was a second trial refused, when the known animosity of the president of the court against the prisoner was considered?' Though it has been alleged, and was alleged by the traitor himself, Count Thurn's animosity against Caracciolo has never been proved. If the animosity really existed, it cannot be imagined to have affected the finding of the court. For, had the count been the prince's dearest friend, the court could not have come to the conclusion that the prince was innocent of the crimes of which he confessed himself guilty. The culprit's petition for a second trial was refused, because (to

use Nelson's own words) he 'had been fairly tried by the officers of his own country.'

'Why was the execution hastened so as to preclude any appeal for mercy, and render the prerogative of mercy useless?' For two reasons,—one sufficient reason, and one overpoweringly strong reason. Caracciolo belonged to the class of 'leaders' to whom mercy, in Ferdinand's opinion, in Maria Caroline's opinion, and in Nelson's opinion, could not be shown. Moreover, under the circumstances it was necessary for the Commander-in-chief of the operations for the reduction of the capital, to show the people of Naples and the French holders of the forts, that he had come to do, and would do his appointed work, vigorously, rigorously, and thoroughly. The moment was critical. Gaieta, Capua, and St. Elmo were still in the hands of the French, who were holding out, in hope of the arrival of the French fleet. Having sailed for Naples, not without hope of winning a second Aboukir in the Italian bay, Nelson meant to make the most of every day given him by fortune, before the time when he should have enough to do in thrashing the hostile navy. He wished to close accounts with the French on land, before he should have to try conclusions with the French at sea. Was this a moment for him to shilly-shally about hanging an egregious traitor, whose quick execution would have a salutary effect on the anarchical capital and the hostile forts?

Whilst there is no evidence that, in the June of 1799, Nelson was in any degree stirred by 'a baneful passion' for Lady Hamilton, there is no tittle of testimony that she ever swayed him from his duty in

any matter, great or small, either before or after she became a chief object of his affectionate devotion.

Yet Southey, on no better testimony than the anecdotes of scandalous or perverse books and the tattle of violent political journals, could insinuate that Nelson not only murdered Caracciolo, but murdered him at the instigation of a supremely charming and wicked woman. When he displayed perhaps the meanest side of his essentially ignoble spirit by affecting to palliate Nelson's so-called Neapolitan 'atrocities,' with a suggestion that the English Admiral would have acted otherwise had it not been for Lady Hamilton, Buonaparte knew what he was doing. Overflowing with rancorous spite against his greatest rival in martial glory, the Corsican saw that to make the world attribute Nelson's alleged perfidy and murders to his love of a pretty demirep was to stab his honour at the heart. But, through some mental perversion or moral obliquity, Southey and Alison seem to have persuaded themselves that they did Nelson a service, and relieved perfidy and murder in some degree of their repulsiveness, by urging that he broke faith and shed blood unrighteously, because he was so unfortunate as to be the victim of 'an infatuated attachment.'

CHAPTER V.

THE RECOVERY OF NAPLES.

Alison's Inaccuracies—The Hamiltons in Naples Bay—Maria Caroline at Palermo—The Queen and her Deputy—Defeat of the French Party—Punishments and Vengeance—Maria Caroline's Resentments—Her occasional Clemency and Forbearance—Her Gifts to the Poor of Naples—Lady Hamilton's Perilous Power—Suitors for her Compassion—Dr. Carillez implores her for Protection—Ferdinand leaves Palermo—His Month's Stay on Board the British Admiral's Flag-Ship—Lady Hamilton's Letter of the 19th of July to Mr. Greville—Naples or Minorca?—Nelson's Momentous Decision—His Disregard of Lord Keith's Orders—He is censured by the Admiralty—But justified by the Event—Celebration of the Battle of the Nile—The 'Ruling Woman' rejoices—Preparations for Revels and Galas at Palermo—The *Foudroyant* Sails for Sicily.

1799 A.D.

MORE or less wrong in nearly everything he says of Sicilian doings in the summer of 1799, Alison represents that, when he came to the Bay of Naples with his fleet in the June of that year, Nelson was accompanied by the King, Queen, and Court of the Two Sicilies. In all this, Alison is wrong. The Hereditary Prince was on board the *Foudroyant*, together with Sir William and Lady Hamilton; but, though important personages of the royal circle, they were not 'the Court.' The King did not leave Palermo before the evening of the 3rd of July, when on starting for

the Bay of Naples he left the Queen behind him. Coming on board the *Foudroyant*, which became the seat of his government for several weeks, he remained on the vessel for an entire month (from the 8th of July to the 5th of August), when he returned with Nelson and the Hamiltons to Sicily, *where the Queen had remained the whole while.* According to Alison, the King returned to Sicily, because his humanity shrank from the thought of witnessing the atrocities of the vengeance, that would soon be wreaked on the prostrate republicans. According to the same popular historian, these atrocities were personally directed and superintended at Naples by the Queen and Lady Hamilton, whom the humane Ferdinand left there, to accomplish the bloody work he had not the fortitude to contemplate.

> The King (says Alison), whose humanity could not endure the sight of the punishments which *were preparing*, returned to Sicily, and left the administration of justice in the hands of the Queen and Lady Hamilton. Numbers were immediately condemned and executed; the vengeance of the populace supplied what was wanting in the celerity of the criminal tribunals; neither age, nor sex, nor rank were spared; women as well as men, youths of sixteen and grey-headed men of seventy, were alike led out to the scaffold, and infants of twelve years of age sent into exile.

To exhibit Nelson as a cordial co-operator in the fiendish atrocities of Maria Caroline and Lady Hamilton, the historian of 'Europe' says, in a marginal note, '*Nelson concurs in these iniquitous proceedings.*'

It is thus that popular history is written.

Instead of returning to Sicily before the punishment of the recent insurgents, Ferdinand remained

in the Bay of Naples, whilst the Parthenopeian delinquents were being brought to trial. Instead of 'leaving the administration of justice in the hands of the Queen and Lady Hamilton,' he left the trial and punishment of political offenders to the criminal tribunals. The Queen did not put her foot in Naples from the time of her husband's departure from Palermo to the hour of his return to Sicily. Far from eager to re-enter her capital, Her Majesty was determined not to enter it again till she could do so with dignity and safety, and did not return to it till the trials of republicans were over. When the King returned to Palermo, he was accompanied by Lady Hamilton. The historian, who is so mistaken on these points, may be presumed to be a good deal less than severely accurate in what he says of the measures taken for the punishment of rebels and the annihilation of their party.

That those measures were sternly rigorous and in some instances even cruel is probable. That Maria Caroline was herself largely accountable for the severity and thoroughness of those measures may be inferred from several passages of her letters to Lady Hamilton. That the vengeance of the populace against the persons, whom they held chiefly accountable for their recent troubles, was more passionate and revolting than the vengeance of the law-courts may also be assumed. Revolutions are seldom brought about or effectually counteracted without excesses of violence. Napoleon the Third did not get the upper hand of Paris by washing the boulevards with rose-water. In later time the Parisian

Commune was not suppressed without a good deal of miscellaneous shooting and stabbing by unauthorized murderers as well as duly commissioned troops. The suppression of the communists in arms was followed by wholesale deportations of communists, who had laid down their arms. The death-sentences and sentences to exile against the communists were not delivered with nice regard to the age, sex, and social condition of the offenders. In truth, painful though they are to contemplate, the barbarous and vindictive excesses about which Southey and Alison wrote so passionately, as the immediate and hideous results of Ferdinand's restoration, were only such excesses as invariably attend the suppression of a formidable rebellion. According to Clarke and M'Arthur, 'the number of traitors who in consequence suffered at different times, after being regularly tried and condemned by the law of their country, amounted to about seventy persons.'

If ever excuses may be made for the savage vindictiveness of mobs, they may be made for the excesses of cruelty, with which the Neapolitan populace wreaked its wrath on the partisans of the fallen republic. By whom had the revolution, for which the populace paid so dearly, been brought about? A small minority of the Neapolitans,—a minority consisting of three or four hundred individuals of the aristocratic class, a handful of professors, and three or four thousand individuals of the merchants, official people, and richer bourgeoisie. It is indisputable that the revolution was distasteful to the populace. What was the moral quality of the handful of individuals who

had imposed the republic on the people at large? Because it suited the purpose of a few partisan scribes to represent that the Neapolitan court-party consisted wholly of profligate men and unchaste women, and that the Neapolitan French party comprised all the few good people of Naples, it does not follow that the writers, who misled Southey, should be believed at the present day by sober and intelligent inquirers for the truth. Doubtless the entourage of their Sicilian Majesties numbered not a few scoundrels and libertines of both sexes. But people of like and equal badness figured in the cliques of the French party. Indeed, some of the vilest people about the Court were in league with Monsieur Garat, and in the confidence of the French party. If it must be conceded on the one hand that many of the Neapolitan Jacobins were honest and in other ways virtuous enthusiasts, it is on the other hand no less certain that some of them were not unfairly described by Lady Hamilton as 'pretty gentlemen,' who 'deserved to be hanged long ago.' By what means had this minority accomplished its design on the commonweal, in insolent disregard of the wishes of the people at large? A foreign army and a French occupation:—a foreign army that had driven the Court beyond sea and slaughtered thousands of the populace: a French occupation, that had plundered sacred institutions, multiplied taxes, almost extinguished trade, reduced countless families from competence to destitution, despoiled the capital of its works of art, stripped the very streets of their public ornaments. To say that, on the fall of the minority, who had

wrought them so much grievous wrong, the injured majority should have merely said 'Ah! my dear friends, you were sadly mistaken, but we forgive you and still love you!', is to chatter idly, in forgetfulness of the fact that, so long as human nature shall be in any degree like what it has hitherto been, grievous wrongs will produce fierce resentments.

On what lines Ferdinand and Maria Caroline designed in June, 1799, to proceed for the secure re-establishment of their authority and the utter defeat of the French party, we know from the remarkable letter (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, pp. 233—5), in which the Queen, under date of June 25th, 1799, wrote Lady Hamilton,

'My dear Lady,—I have just received your dear letter without date from the ship, with the Chevalier's for the General . . . . The General writes the wishes of the King, who incloses a note under his own hand for the dear Admiral. I accede entirely to their wishes, but cannot refrain from expressing my sentiments to you . . . . The rebel patriots must lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion to the pleasure of the King. Then, in my opinion, an example should be made of some of the leaders of the representatives, and the others to be transported under pain of death if they return into the dominions of the King, where a register will be kept of them; and of this number should be the Municipalists, Chiefs of Brigade, the most violent Clubbists, and seditious scribblers. No soldier who has served shall ever be admitted into the army; finally, a rigorous severity, prompt and just. The females who have distinguished themselves in the revolution to be treated in the same way, and that without pity . . . . The Sedile, the source of all the evils, which first gave strength to the rebellion, and who have ruined the kingdom and dethroned the King, shall be abolished for ever, as well as the baronial privileges and jurisdiction, in order to ameliorate the slavery

of a faithful people who have replaced their King upon the throne, from which treason, felony, and the culpable indifference of the nobles had driven him. This is not pleasant, but absolutely necessary, for without it the King could not govern quietly his people for six months, who hope for some recompense from his justice, after having done everything for him. Finally, my dear Lady, I recommend Lord Nelson to treat Naples as if it were an Irish town in rebellion similarly placed.' (*Vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson.')

Twelve days later (7th July, 1799), in another long letter, Maria Caroline wrote to Lady Hamilton:

'Migliano is a fool, a vulgar courtier, either royalist or republican, always poor; she is a viper with an infernal tongue, a woman who has always openly defamed the Court and the Government, who after we quitted first exhibited a diabolical character, and was one of the strongest female pillars of the aristocratic rebellion, which dethroned the King by expelling the Vicar-general before the coming of the French: in a word, my dear Lady, I unfortunately know the Neapolitan nobility and all the classes well, and I shall always say the same that there are but the Bourgeois, the working and the lower class, who are faithful and attached, the latter are sometimes misled by the passions, but their sentiments are good.' (*Vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson.')

Eleven days later (18th July, 1799), speaking of individuals who had distinguished themselves in the Parthenopeian revolution, Maria Caroline wrote to the British Minister's wife:

'When I saw the man arrested, and especially noticed to the King, I considered all was over, and that he must submit to his punishment, which will be, in my opinion, an imprisonment in the islands. There being so many leaders, it would be necessary to hang hundreds of them at least, before he could be justly condemned, as he never fought against the King, nor has he been a chief, nor published any of those infamous prints. I have since been obliged to abandon him to his fate, and you must treat him like all the others. There

is Montemileto, the son of Cassano, who fought against the King; Stigliano, a military turncoat, is in the same case as Montemileto (except that he has not such a bad wife); they should all be punished alike, and I beg no particular favour may be shown to any. As to the others, the public might make very troublesome complaints, and *certes*, at this time, the motives influencing the judgments and the pardons granted will be commented on, and their justice arraigned.' (*Vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson.')

The letters, from which these extracts have been made, may be found (translated into English) in the first volume of Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' together with numerous other letters from Maria Caroline, which should be studied carefully by readers who would have a complete and precise knowledge of the Queen's temper and policy at this point of her career, and of Lady Hamilton's part in the events, in respect to which she was again only the channel through which the Queen transmitted her sentiments to other persons. After perusing the letter of the 25th of June, which in substance and sentiment accorded with the epistles addressed to Nelson by the King and his prime minister, no reader is likely to persist in thinking that Nelson went beyond the King's purpose and instructions in dealing so promptly with Caracciolo. That Maria Caroline was animated by vehement animosity against the revolutionary leaders, and by a strong opinion that the most should be made of the good opportunity for crushing the Neapolitan Jacobins, is obvious. It is impossible to think tenderly, difficult to think with fairness of the Queen, who, sitting in her cabinet at Palermo, wrote so bitterly and unrelentingly of the wretched men and women, who had been con-

cerned in the rebellion. But Maria Caroline was no mere Queen-Consort. The ruling woman would have shown herself insufficient for her peculiar position, had she been swayed at such a moment by compassion for the malefactors to whose disadvantage she plied her pen. There are times when ruling persons, whether they be men or women, are required to send persons to death, slavery or exile, in the interest of society at large. In estimating the spirit of personal vindictiveness that is now and then discernible in what Lady Hamilton called the Queen's 'orders,' the judicial reader will remember the various circumstances, which almost justified the emotions of hatred and vengeance.

In fairness to Maria Caroline it should also be recorded that, whilst writing thus bitterly of her enemies, she was not indifferent to the sufferings of the unoffending Neapolitans, on whom the hateful republic had been imposed. 'I send you again,' the Queen wrote to Lady Hamilton, on the 20th of July, 1799, '600 ducats to bestow as your benevolent soul suggests upon the unfortunate who need it, certain that it will be dispensed appropriately, for I know your heart.' Ten days later (30th July, 1799), Marie Antoinette's sister sent a larger sum of money to her envoy in Naples Bay, together with these words, 'I beg of you to have the kindness to distribute the 1,000 ducats which I send you as you think best; there is, besides that Luciana who calls herself Fortunata, another common woman called Piete de Pesce, at the statue of San Gennaro in Strada Nuova; pardon these commissions, but I know

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your excellent heart, and take advantage of it. Moreover, evidence is not wanting, that, if she could, through Lady Hamilton, admonish her husband to deal unrelentingly with particular rebels, Maria Caroline was also capable of commending offenders to his royal clemency. Writing to Lady Hamilton on the 28th of July, 1799, for the advantage of 'the unfortunate Pignatelli,' towards whom Ferdinand had good reason to feel bitterly, Her Majesty remarked: 'The King, on his return from the re-taking of Naples, might, I think, grant pardon to him, and to Pépé and Migliano; the three unfortunate beings have erred, but are not Jacobins, and they say that seven months' disgrace, apparently to please the Allies, ought to suffice.' Regard being had to the disdainful acrimony with which Maria Caroline wrote of Migliano three weeks earlier, and to her cogent reasons for thinking of Migliano's wife with aversion, this intervention in behalf of the 'fool and vulgar courtier,' whose wife was 'a viper with an infernal tongue,' indicates that Her Majesty's bark was sometimes worse than her bite, and that she could sometimes relent speedily to those who had greatly incensed her. That Marie Antoinette's sister was capable of mercy as well as of persistence in revengeful emotion, is certified by Miss Cornelia Knight, who had good opportunities for observing Her Majesty's conduct at the very time, when she is supposed by most writers to have surrendered herself wholly and absolutely to passionate vindictiveness. 'The Queen,' says Miss Knight, 'who has been accused of so much vindictive cruelty, was, to my certain knowledge, the

cause of many pardons being granted. And there was one lady in particular whom she saved, who was her declared enemy, and at the head of a revolutionary association.'

To argue from the letters which passed between the Queen at Palermo and Lady Hamilton on board the *Foudroyant*, that Ferdinand (to use Alison's words) placed 'the administration of justice' in the hands of the two ladies, would be to misrepresent the nature of the correspondence and the position of the British Minister's wife. Respecting the measures to be taken for the punishment of the Neapolitan Jacobins, Maria Caroline, in her letter of the 25th of June, only announced what had already been agreed upon by herself, the King, and the Prime Minister, and was communicated directly to Nelson by Ferdinand and Sir John Acton. But though they did not make her 'an administrator of justice,' in the ordinary and fair sense of the term, the Queen's letters no doubt gave Lady Hamilton a dangerous power over the royal prerogative of mercy, and in a large number of cases instructed her how she was to exercise the power. By the Queen's favour and design, Lady Hamilton had for some time acquired much influence over the King, who had admired her from an early date of her residence in Naples, and this influence Lady Hamilton now used, in accordance with the Queen's wishes, for the advantage or disadvantage of a considerable proportion of the petitioners for their sovereign's clemency. At the same time, she was no less influential over Nelson, who was regarded by Neapolitans of either party and all classes as having

(to use the words of Dr. Carillez) 'the power from the King of Naples to dispose of everything.' Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that, soon after Nelson's arrival in the Bay of Naples, Lady Hamilton was inundated with solicitations for the exercise of her mediatory influence with the Admiral and the King. Both before and after Ferdinand's coming on board the *Foudroyant*, she was the person on whose intercession hundreds of wretched people rested their hopes of pardon or lenient punishment. Letters came to her daily from captives, languishing in the castles or the prison-ships. At the same time, she was approached personally by supplicants who, being themselves under no suspicion of Jacobinical proclivities, had the courage and humanity to declare their concern for prisoners who had been sentenced to death or deportation, or were still awaiting trial. Ferdinand was still at Palermo, when, on the 3rd of July, 1799, the unfortunate Dr. Carillez (the King's physician, better known to students of Nelsonian literature as *Dominico Cirillo*) wrote the pathetic letter that will soon be submitted to readers. The King had been some days on board the *Foudroyant*, when, on the 17th of July, 1799, the officers of His Britannic Majesty's ship *Leviathan* wrote to Lady Hamilton in behalf of 'the unfortunate family of Peatti,' entreating her to submit an accompanying petition for pardon to His Majesty's favourable consideration. On the same day, Nelson wrote to Mrs. Cadogan at Palermo, 'Our dear Lady' [*i.e.*, Lady Hamilton] 'is also, I can assure you, perfectly well, but has her time so much taken up with excuses from rebels,

Jacobins, and fools, that she is every day most heartily tired. Our conversation is, as often as we are liberated from these teazers, of you and your other friends in the house at Palermo; and I hope we shall very soon return to see you. Till then recollect that we are restoring happiness to the kingdom of Naples, and doing good to millions.'

The supplicatory epistle, written in English, from Dr. Carillez (Dominico Cirillo) to Lady Hamilton runs thus,

'On board the *St. Sebastian*,
'3rd of July, 1799.

'MADAM,

'I hope you won't take it ill, if I take this liberty to trouble you with a few lines, in order to make you recollect that nobody in this world can protect and save a miserable and innocent being, but you. I have lost every thing, my house is but a heap of ruins; I don't know what is become of my desolate family, I am quite in the dark, not knowing whether my poor old mother exists or not, after the general destruction. Milady, you are a sensible and charitable lady, I know your sentiments of humanity, therefore you alone may do everything in my favour. You are the intimate friend of Lord Nelson, he justly esteems you, and he has the power from the King of Naples to dispose of everything. The conduct of my life, before and after the French Revolution, has been always honest, pure, and loyal. I was often called in to attend French people, while they were ill, but never had any intimacy with them, and never entertained any correspondence whatsoever with them. When General Championnet came to Naples, he sent for me and appointed me for one of the members of the Prevesory (?) Government he was going to establish. The day after I sent to him a letter, and formally resigned the employment, and saw no more of him. During three months, I did nothing else but support with my own money, and with that of some charitable friends, the great number of . . . existing in the town. I insisted *(sic)* all the Physi-

cians, surgeons, and associations to go round to visit poor sick persons, who had no possibility of curing their disorders. After this period Abrial (?) came to settle the new Government, and he insisted upon my accepting of a place in the Legislative Commission. I refused the second and the third time; at last I was threatened and forced.. What could I do, how could I and what could I oppose? In the short time, however, of this administration, I never took an oath against the King, never wrote, nor never said any single offensive word against any of the Royal Family, never appeared in any of the public ceremonies, never went to any public dinners, never put on the national dress; no public money came through my hands, and the only 100 ducats in paper, that were given to me, where (*sic*) distributed to the poor. The few laws, that passed in my time, where (*sic*) only those that could prove beneficial to the people. All other affairs where (*sic*) transacted by the executive commission, which conceled every thing from us. These, Milady, are real facts, and even if I was to die this very moment I would not conceale the truth to you. Your Ladiship knows at present the true history not of my crimes, but of the involuntary faults I was carried in by the force of the French army. Now, madam, in the name of God, dont abandon your miserable friend. Remember that by saving my life, the gratitude of an honest family will be eternal? Your generosity, that of your husband and of the great Nelson, are my only hopes. Procure me a full pardon from our merciful king, and the public will not loose an infinite number of medical observations collected in the space of forthy years. Remember I did all I could to save the Botanic Garden at Caserta, and tried to be as useful to the children of Mrs. Greffer as I could. I think it unnecessary, madam, to trouble you any longer, you must pardon this long letter and excuse me in the present deplorable condition. I beg you to present my best respects to Sir William, and to Lord Nelson, while I am, Madam,

'Your most obedient humble servant,

'DR. CARILLEZ.'

Though it cannot have failed to stir Lady Hamilton profoundly, this appeal (to which Sir Harris

Nicolas, *vide* 'Dispatches and Letters,' vol. iii, p. 505, seems to refer in a note, touching 'a petition from Cirillo to Lady Hamilton') failed to save the writer's life. In one of his private notes (*vide* Clarke and M'Arthur) Nelson says, 'Dominico Cirillo, who had been the King's physician, might have been saved, but that he chose to play the fool, and lie; denying that he had ever made any speeches against the Government and [saying] that he only took care of the poor in the hospitals.' Attributing the doctor's execution to the King's severity, Clarke and M'Arthur assert that 'the Queen of Naples, on her knees, begged of his Majesty the life of Cirillo, but in vain,'—a statement to be received with lively suspicion, as the Queen was at Palermo, when the doctor's case came under judicial consideration at Naples. As Sir Harris Nicolas justly remarks, 'If the statement about the Queen's intercession be true, he [*i.e.*, Cirillo] must have been executed after the King's return to Palermo, because Her Majesty was not then at Naples.'

The position, in which Lady Hamilton appeared at this moment of her greatest power, was a strange place of dignity, and of influence for the life or death, freedom or slavery of hundreds of miserable individuals, to be occupied by a woman who had formerly been a London nursery-maid.

On the 2nd of July, 1799, Maria Caroline wrote from Palermo of her husband's arrangements to Lady Hamilton, 'This evening, whilst I write to you, the Portuguese brig is arrived, with letters of the 30th, and that of the dear Admiral to the King has determined

him, and he will leave us to-morrow evening, which causes me many tears, and will cost me more, the King not thinking it advisable that I should go for the short time he calculates upon remaining there; however he goes to-morrow evening—General Acton, Castelcicala, and Ascoli will perhaps accompany him, and 1000 infantry and 600 cavalry will march [ ] Acton and Bourcard. The King wishes to embark in his frigate accompanied by the English and the Portuguese brig. I shall remain solitary, offering petitions to heaven for a glorious and successful issue,' (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, p. 260). Five days later (7th July, 1799), having learnt that the barque, which left Naples for Palermo on the 5th, passed the King's frigate when he was about forty miles from Capri, Maria Caroline thought it probable that her husband had already reached Naples. From Lady Hamilton's letters it appears that Nelson's arrival in the Bay of Naples preceded the King's arrival by no more than fourteen days. Ferdinand seems therefore to have gone on board the *Foudroyant* on the 8th of July, two days before the time to which the incident is assigned by Pettigrew and other writers.

Under the royal standard, that floated over the ship, Ferdinand during the next four weeks held levées on the quarter-deck and councils of state in the chief-cabin of the *Foudroyant*. It was from the deck of the British Admiral's flag-ship, that Ferdinand a few days after his appearance in the bay saw the republican flag lowered from the Fort of St. Elmo, and witnessed the exaltation of the emblem of his own

royal sway over the stronghold, that commanded the capital:—a spectacle that caused the King to embrace successively each of the three persons (Lord Nelson, Sir William Hamilton, and Lady Hamilton) to whom he was chiefly indebted for his speedy restoration to his continental dominions. The reduction of St. Elmo was soon followed by the capitulations of Capua and Gaeta.

How life went on board the *Foudroyant*, whilst she was the seat of Ferdinand's government and his place of abode, appears from the following letter,—

Lady Hamilton to the Honourable Charles Greville.

'On Board the *Foudroyant*, Bay of Naples,
'July 19th, 1799.

'DEAR SIR,

'We have an opportunity of sending to England, and I cannot let pass this good opportunity, without thanking you for your kind remembrance in Sir William's letter. Everything goes on well here. We have got Naples, all the Forts; and to-night our troops go to Capua. His Majesty is with *us* on board, were he holds his Councils and Levées every day. General Acton and Castelcicala with one gentleman of the bed-chamber attend His Majesty. Sir William and Lord Nelson with Acton are the King's Counsellers, and you may be ashured that the future government will be most just and solid. The King has bought his experience most dearly, but at last he knows his friends from his enemies, and allso knows the defects of his former government, and is determined to remedy them. For he has great good sense, and his misfortunes have made him steady and look into himself.

'The Queen is not come. She sent me as her Deputy; for I am very popular, speak the Neapolitan language, and [am] consider'd, with Sir William, the friend of the people. The Queen is waiting at Palermo, and she is determined, as there has been a great outcry against her, not to risk

coming with the King; for if it had not succeeded [on] his arrival, and he not been well receved, she wou'd not bear the blame, nor be in the way. We arrived before the King 14 days, and I had privatly seen all the Loyal party, and having the head of the Lazerony an old friend, he came in the night of our arrival, and told me he had 90 thousand Lazeronis ready, at the holding up of his finger, with . . . . with arms. Lord Nelson, to whom I enterpreted, got a large supply of arms for the rest, and they were deposited with this man. In the mean time, the . . . . . were waiting in orders. The bombs we sent into St. Elmo were returned, and the citty in confusion. I sent for Hispali, the Head of the Lazeroni, and told him, in great confidence, that the King wou'd be soon at Naples, and that all we required of him was to keep the citty quiet for ten days, from that moment. We give him onely one hundred of our marine troops. These brave men kept all the town in order. And he brought the heads of all his 90 thousand round the ship on the King's arrival; and he is to have promotion. I have through him made "the Queen's party," and the people at large have pray'd her to come back, and she is now very popular. *I send her every night a messenger to Palermo, with all the news and letters. And she gives me the orders* the same* [*way*]. I have given audiences to those of her party, and setled matters between the nobility and Her Majesty. She is not to see on her arrival any of her former evil counsellers, nor the women of fashion, alltho Ladys of the Bedchamber,—formerly her friends and companions, who did her dishonour by their desolute life.

'*All, all* is changed. She has been very unfortunate; but she is a good woman, and has sense enough to proffit of her past unhappiness, and will make for the future *amende honorable* for the past. In short, if I can judge, it may turn out fortunate that the Neapolitans have had a dose of Republicanism.

'But what a glory to our Good King, to our Country,

* It is obvious that Maria Caroline's special envoy and correspondent at the Bay of Naples regarded herself in the summer of 1799 as nothing more than an agent for executing the Queen's orders, and sending Her Majesty budgets of intelligence.

to ourselves, that *we*—our brave fleet, our great Nelson—have had the happiness of restoring [the] King to his throne, to the Neapolitans their much-loved King, and been the instrument of giving a future solid and just government to the Neapolitans!

'The measures the King is taking are all to be approved of. The guilty are punish'd, and the faithfull are rewarded. I have not been on shore but once. The King gave us leave to go as far as St. Elmo's, to see the effect of the bombs. I saw at a distance our despoiled house, and town and villa, that have been plundered. Sir William's new appartment,—a bomb burst in it! But it made me so low-spirited, I don't desire to go again.

'We shall, as soon as the government is fixed, return to Palermo, and bring back the Royal family; for I foresee not any permanent government, till that event takes place. Nor would it be politick, after all the hospitality the King and Queen received at Palermo, to carry them off in a hurry. So, you see, there is great management required.

'I am quite worn out. For I am enterpreter to Lord Nelson, the King, and the Queen; and altogether feil quite shatter'd; but, as things go well, that keeps me up. We dine now every-day with the King at 12 o'clock. Dinner is over by one. His Majesty goes to sleep, and we sit down to write in this heat; and on board you may guess what we suffer.

'My mother is at Palermo. But I have an English lady* with me, who is of use to me in writing, and helping to keep papers and things in order. We have given the King all the upper cabbin; all but one room that we write in and receive the ladies who come to the King. Sir William and I have an appartment . . . in the ward room (?); and as to Lord Nelson, he is here and there and everywhere. I never saw such zeal and activity in any one as in this wonderful man. My dearest Sir William, thank God! is well, and of the greatest use now to the King. We hope Capua will fall in a few days, and then we shall be able to return to Palermo. On Sunday last, we had prayers

* Probably Miss Cornelia Knight.

on board. The King asisted, and was much pleased with the order, decency, and good behaviour of the men, the officers, &c. Pray write to me. God bless you, my dear sir, and believe me,

'Ever yours affectionately,

'EMMA HAMILTON.

'P.S.—It would be a charity to send me some things; for in saving all for my royal and dear friend, I lost my little all. Never mind.'

Whilst he was intent on reducing Naples, and driving the French, to their last man, out of the Neapolitan territory, Nelson found himself, neither for the first nor the last time, in a position peculiarly trying to the judgment and moral courage of a commander of a great military force. To accomplish the purpose for which he had approached Naples, it was needful for him, in the middle of July, 1799, to act on the resolution he was forming a few hours earlier, *viz.*, to persist in his measures for the reduction of Naples, even though the persistence should require him to jeopardize the British interest at Minorca, in direct disregard of an order from his commanding officer. 'Should such an order,' he wrote to Earl Spencer, on July 13th, 1799, 'come at this moment, it would be cause for consideration whether Minorca is to be risked, or the two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; I think my decision would be to risk the former.' The day on which he penned these remarkable words to the Admiralty was the same day on which, at a later moment, he had to decide finally whether he should secure Naples or Minorca. The ink with which the words were written had not long been dry, when he re-

ceived Lord Keith's order (dated, 27th of June, 1799) to hasten, with the whole or greater part of his force, to Minorca, which, in Lord Keith's opinion, was menaced by the recent junction of the French and Spanish fleets. Instead of repairing to Minorca, with the whole or great part of his force, Nelson remained at Naples with his armament. Six days later (19th of July,—the day on which Lady Hamilton dated her long letter from the *Foudroyant* to her nephew, Mr. Charles Greville), Nelson received another order (dated, 9th of July, 1799) from Lord Keith, to make the safety of Minorca his first concern. To this second order Nelson was only a few degrees less disobedient than he was to the earlier mandate. Writing frankly to Lord Keith, that he thought it better to save the kingdom of Naples at the risk of Minorca, than to save Minorca at the risk of the kingdom of Naples, Nelson remained with his squadron in Naples Bay; but, on the 22nd of July, he despatched Rear-Admiral Duckworth to protect Minorca with a small force.

In thus disregarding orders, when he saw Minorca was distinctly menaced, though he had grounds for thinking it would not be attacked by the allied fleets, Nelson was painfully alive to the possible consequences of his disobedience, should the event discredit his judgment. In thinking he might under certain contingencies be 'broken' for his heroic insubordination, he no doubt exaggerated the risk he incurred; for generous allowances would have been made by the Admiralty and by all England for an error committed by so great a man, in his desire to

do what was best for his king and country. But when it is remembered that he was actually censured by the Admiralty for the disobedience, it cannot be doubted that, had the allied fleet possessed themselves of Minorca, he would have encountered a storm of adverse criticism, that would have lowered him in the esteem of the navy, and shaken public confidence in his discretion. Fortunately the event, by justifying his judgment, spared him so great a reverse, and even disposed England to applaud his technical misdemeanour. Whilst the allied fleets left Minorca alone, the French were expelled from Southern Italy.

The first anniversary of the Battle of the Nile was celebrated in the Bay of Naples on the 1st of August, 1799, by the British squadron and the attendant Sicilian ships, with feasting, music, and picturesque revelry. At the grand dinner on board the *Foudroyant*, King Ferdinand proposed the chief toast of the festal hour; and when His Majesty closed his speech by drinking the Admiral's health, a salvo of twenty-one guns was fired from all the Sicilian ships of war and from the castles on shore. In the evening there was an illumination of the combined fleets, one of the chief features of the gala being the Roman galley whose oars were fitted with lamps, and whose centre displayed a nostral column, where Nelson's name outshone the surrounding lights, whilst the stern of the vast luminous toy exhibited his portrait, supported by two angels. More than two thousand variegated lamps were hung about this vessel, on which an orchestra of musicians and singers proclaimed in artful

strains how the invincible and ever-conquering Nelson had delivered Naples from the gloom of death and her children from a doleful fate.

Of the many persons who were absent from this gala before Naples against their will, none felt the absence more acutely than Maria Caroline, who wrote (in French) to her dear friend on board the *Foudroyant*, 'My very dear Lady, You would scarcely believe how very desirous I felt to be with you on the 1st of August, at table with our hero, and all his fellow-heroes, companions and officers. I should have given so heartily the *hip, hip, hip*, that, in spite of the cannon's roar, my voice would have been heard, so deeply is my heart penetrated.' The Queen, whose spirits had been rising steadily from the opening days of last April, was regaining her appetite for pleasure. And surely, as she was a ruling woman, she had just now more reasons for gladness than sorrow. Naples had been cleared of the accursed French, and the crown of Naples was again upon her husband's brow. The 'French party' was crushed. The rope had settled accounts with the most pernicious of the Parthenopeian leaders. The less guilty of them had in mercy's name been sent to chains and slavery in the islands. Her enemies were biting the dust, from which few of them would ever rise. Should fate remove her docile husband, his crown would pass to her docile son. Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that Maria Caroline was capable of rejoicing. On the 19th of July, 1799, she had written to Lady Hamilton, 'They are making great preparations for the *fête* of St. Rosalie and the return of the King.' And

now, in the opening days of August, when she had already heard of the fall of Capua, and the next boat might bring her tidings that the hitch in the proceedings for the capitulation of Gaeta was over, Maria Caroline was busying herself in the preparations for *fêtes* and court-galas, and was counting the days and hours to the time, when at the latest she would go in state to the sea-shore, to embrace her husband on his triumphal return to Palermo, and put her royal arms about the neck of her dear Lady Hamilton.

At the same time the King and his 'Grande Maitresse,' as he styled Lady Hamilton, were thinking how pleasant it would be to get away from the capital, where so much ghastly work had been, and was still being done, for the sake of order and good government, and to forget all about criminal informations, and trials, and executions, and stern sentences, and teazing supplicants, in the elegant gaieties and delicious repasts of the *fêtes*, and balls, and concerts, with which the friends of order and good government would soon be showing their gratitude to Heaven and the British Navy at Palermo.

Lady Hamilton to the Hon. Charles Greville.

'*Foudroyant*, Bay of Naples, Aug. 5th, 1799.

'As Sir William wrote to you to-day, my dear sir, I will only say that the kingdom of Naples is clear. Gasta and Capua have capitulated, and we sail to-night for Palermo, having been here seven weeks [ ], and every-thing gone on to our wishes. We return with a kingdom to present to my much-loved Queen. I have allso been so happy to succeed in all my company, (*sic*) and every-thing I was charged with. The King is in great spirits. I have received all the ladies for him, and he calls me his Grande

Maitresse. I was near taking him at his word. But, as I have had seven long years service at Court, I am waiting to get quiet. I am not ambitious of more honours. We have had the King on board a month, and I have never been able to go once on shore. *Do you not call that slavery?* I believe we shall come home in the spring. It is necessary, for our pockets and bodys want bracing. Captain Oswald will give [you] this. He has been indefatigable under Troubridge, and goes home to be made Post. God bless you, and believe me, my dear Greville ('tis not a crime to call you so!)

'Your sincere and affectionate,

'EMMA HAMILTON.

'My mother is at Palermo, longing to see her Emma. You can't think how she is loved and respected by all. She has adopted a mode of living that is charming. She [h]as a good appartment in our house, allways lives with us, dines, &c., &c. Only, when she does not like it (for example, at great dinners) she herself refuses, and [h]as allways a friend to dine with her; and La Signora Madame dell'Ambasciatora is known all over Palermo, the same as she was at Naples. The Queen has been very kind to her in my absence, and went to see her, and told her she ought to be proud of her glorious daughter that has done so much in these last suffering months. There is great preparations for our return. The Queen comes out with all Palermo to meet us. A landing-place is made,—balls, suppers, illuminations, all ready. The Queen has prepared my cloaths—in short, if I have fag'd, I am more than repaid. I tell you this, that you may see I am not unworthy of having been once in some degree your eléve. God bless you!'

In the postscript of her letter of the 19th of July, 1799, Lady Hamilton wrote to her nephew, Charles Greville, 'It would be a charity to send me some things; for in saving all for my royal and dear friend, I lost my little all,'—*viz.*, the same *little all* which she subsequently valued at £9,000! In the

postscript of her last-given letter (of the 5th of August, 1799) to the same correspondent, Lady Hamilton says, 'The Queen has prepared my cloaths, —in short, if I have fag'd, I am more than repaid—' an announcement to Mr. Greville that there was no longer any need for him to send her a present of wearing apparel.

CHAPTER VI.

GIFTS AND HONOURS.

From Naples to Palermo—Royal Gifts—Diamonds and Coach-loads of Magnificent Dresses—The Dukedom of Brontë—Nelson's Assignment of Revenue to his Father—Celebration of the Recovery of Naples—Nelson's Honour—Lady Hamilton's Vindication—Nelson as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet—His brief Visits to Palermo—Capture of *Le Genereux*—A Gallant Frigate—Nelson's Letters to the Emperor Paul—Lady Hamilton decorated with the Cross of St. John of Jerusalem—Her Services to the Maltese—Her Exaggeration of those Services—Pettigrew's Account of Them—Inquiries from the Herald's College—Grant of Arms to Lady Hamilton—She Assigns her Birth to Preston in Lancashire, instead of Great Neston in Cheshire—Probable Reason for this Misdescription.

1799—1800 A.D.

LEAVING Naples Bay in the evening of the 5th of August, 1799, Nelson landed, on the 8th at Palermo, where the King was received with acclamations, and Lady Hamilton was welcomed by Maria Caroline with passionate expressions of delight, affection, and gratitude.

Controlled by these sentiments, the Queen lavished gifts on the 'dear Lady,' to whom she felt herself scarcely less indebted than to Nelson for the recovery of Naples. After embracing the British minister's wife at the place of public welcome, she put upon

her neck a rich gold chain, to which was attached the donor's miniature portrait, set with diamonds, so that some of the gems formed the words, 'Eterna Gratitudine.' A day or so later, Maria Caroline sent to her friend's house two coach loads of magnificent dresses, that were valued at upwards of £3,000, together with a richly jewelled picture of King Ferdinand, worth a thousand guineas. At the same time, another jewelled picture of the King was sent as an offering to the British Ambassador. The value of the presents sent at this time by the Queen to the Hamiltons, was computed at six thousand pounds. Lady Hamilton was therefore lavishly compensated for the loss of that part of her wardrobe, which she left behind her at Naples in the previous December,—the loss on which she partly rested her claim for a national pension, when she had so completely 'talked herself out of a just view of the proportions of things' as to think it a loss of £9,000.

At the same time, Nelson received a reward worthy of the services for which it was rendered and of the sovereign who requited them. Receiving from Ferdinand the Sicilian dukedom of Brontë, Nelson received also the feud of Brontë in the Farther Sicily, that yielded in fortunate times a yearly revenue of £3,000 sterling. For some days Nelson declined this noble but not inordinate honorarium, from a fear that his acceptance of so great a gift would expose him to a suspicion of having served the King of the Two Sicilies from an ignoble motive. It was not till the Hamiltons and King Ferdinand had entreated

him to have due regard for the honour of the Bourbon Prince, whom he had reinstated in the nobler part of his kingdom, that the British Admiral consented to accept the enrichment he would rather have avoided. It was characteristic of Nelson that, after yielding to the arguments which decided him, on the 13th of August, 1799, to take the feud, his first act was to assign from its revenue a first charge of £500 a-year for life to his father.

Three weeks later (3rd of September, 1799), the Recovery of Naples was celebrated at Colli (Palermo) by the splendid *fête* champêtre, the preparations for which had been in progress for several weeks. The most curious, though scarcely the most effective, of the several theatrical scenes of this court-gala was enacted at the Temple of Fame, which had been built and filled with life-size figures, beautifully modelled in wax, for a chief diversion of the triumphal festivity. One of the statues represented Lady Hamilton in the character of Victory, holding in her outstretched hand a laurel-wreath, for the appropriate decoration of the effigy of the British Admiral, who was represented in the waxen tableau, as being introduced by Sir William Hamilton to the benignant Goddess. This trophy in wax had been prepared for the scene, with which Nelson and his two friends were welcomed to the *fête* on their appearance at the steps of the Temple, where they were received by their Sicilian Majesties and their children, as the three chief guests of the gala, in the presence of a multitude of courtiers. After embracing each of the guests of highest consideration, Ferdi-

nand took from Victory's hand the wreath of laurel (sparkling with diamonds), and laid it on the brow of the hero of Aboukir,—coronets of the same kind being subsequently placed by His Majesty on Sir William and Lady Hamilton. All that followed this droll bit of theatrical extravaganza—the dances, successive concerts, dramatic interludes, warblings of courtly odes, picturesque distractions, torch-light processions, fire-works on land, and explosions of fire-ships on water—may be left to the imagination. Enough for the present historian of the folly of Colli to record, that from first to last the *fête* of the Recovery of Naples was a gala to the glorification of Nelson of the Nile. Whilst the Queen and her bevy of Princesses wore ornaments, that to every beholder declared them idolaters of the whole world's Supreme Admiral, the inferior ladies of the triumphant court in their dress and talk followed the fashion of the hour.

In being thus honoured by the Sicilian Court, Nelson was rewarded for services that were altogether honourable. In respect to Caracciolo, he only did his duty as Commander-in-chief of the Sicilian Navy. In handing over to Ferdinand the rebels of the two castles, he acted in accordance with the spirit of the instructions, which placed the King of the Sicilies under his protection. So far as he can be held accountable for the punishment of the Neapolitan rebels, he merely gave Ferdinand the counsel and countenance that Wellington, or any other British commander, would under corresponding circumstances have given the Sicilian monarch.

Lady Hamilton is to be no less fully acquitted of

misconduct, in respect to her part in the proceedings for the recovery of Naples and the annihilation of the Neapolitan 'French party.' That she 'shared' (to use Alison's words) 'in all the feelings of the court' may be admitted. No doubt, she regarded the French nation with aversion, as a supremely wicked people, for having murdered an inoffensive King and virtuous Queen, and for educating other peoples to rise in rebellion against their appointed rulers. No doubt, she detested the Neapolitan Jacobins as a confederation of atrocious individuals, who under circumstances favourable to their designs would surpass the Jacobins of France in excesses of cruelty and malice. But if in these respects she resembled the loyal minority of the Sicilian courtiers, she in the same respects resembled nine-tenths of the educated Englishwomen of her period. It would have been strange, if the Court Beauty, whose superficial education only qualified her to excel in a few graceful and frivolous accomplishments, had taken a philosophical view of the revolutionary movement and a charitable view of its leaders. By every person, who had a share in the formation of her character, republicans and their sentiments were regarded with abhorrence. A narrow-minded though polite aristocrat, Mr. Greville had trained her to think reverentially of aristocracies. On settling in Naples she passed several years under the intellectual dominion of Sir William Hamilton, whose political sentiments were those of a courtier, an old-fashioned tory, and a patrician diplomatist. On becoming Maria Caroline's *protégée*, she came under the influence of a Queen who necessarily

regarded Jacobins as the worst and most pernicious miscreants of the whole universe. On becoming intimate with Nelson, she fell under the dominion of a man, who surpassed even Maria Caroline in detestation of the French and all persons infected with their damnable principles. It is surely neither strange, nor a matter to be objected reproachfully against her, that the pupil of such teachers, a singularly sympathetic and highly emotional woman, thought and felt as they did. It will be time to reflect severely on the unenlightened narrowness of her political views, when some indiscreet eulogist of the faulty though charming woman shall extol her for having been in 1799 superior to the prejudices and antipathies of her associates.

The strength and fervour of her anti-republican sentiments could not, however, be fairly pleaded in extenuation of the excesses of vindictive cruelty towards the Neapolitan Jacobins, with which she has been charged by libellers and careless historians. But in respect to these accusations she seems entitled to an unqualified acquittal. It has already been seen, how the worst of these accusations—the charge of inhuman delight at Caracciolo's execution—is affected by critical examination. Nothing in the way of personal story can be more sure, than she did *not* exult at the Prince's fate, was *not* present at his execution, did *not* beg 'Brontë' (!) to take her in the barge for another look at the hanging body. That such monstrous statements were made to her infamy, in the total absence of justificatory facts and a corresponding presence of exculpatory circumstances,

should dispose readers to think her guiltless of the several other offences, charged against her by the originators of the Caracciolo libels. The one grain of truth to bushels of falsehood in the stories of her visits to Neapolitan dungeons with gifts of poisoned fruit, is that after the fall of the fortress in July, 1799, she paid a single visit to St. Elmo, in order to get a view of Naples from the summit of the stronghold. During her residence of more than seven weeks on board the *Foudroyant* in Naples Bay, her intercourse with those of the Neapolitans with whom she had business was held on board the flag-ship.

Persons, as readers know, often came to her there with supplications addressed to her humanity; and that she did not repel these suppliants with cruel words or an unfeeling manner, appears from the numbers of the petitioners who 'teazed' her (Nelson's expression) with their importunities to the very day, on whose evening she sailed for Palermo. Some of the people to visit her on board the ship-of-war were poor people to whom she gave money, and the persons whom she used as agents for the distribution of money, which Maria Caroline put in her hands for charitable purposes. Containing no single passage, to justify an inference that the receiver of the epistles was animated by ferocious vindictiveness to the Parthenopeian republicans, Maria Caroline's letters to the British Minister's wife are redundant with testimony, that the latter was acutely touched by the miseries of Jacobins and the necessity for punishing them. A passage of one of these letters has already been put in evidence, to show how fully aware Maria Caroline

was that her correspondent pitied a man so little deserving of pity as the treacherous Caracciolo. 'I have seen,' wrote the Ruling Woman to her confidential friend, 'the sad and merited end of the unfortunate and mad-brained Caracciolo. I am sensible how much your excellent heart must have suffered, which increases my sense of gratitude to you.' Whilst the written petitions, that came to the Queen's 'deputy' on board the *Foudroyant*, exhibit an equally pathetic and significant confidence in the womanly softness of her nature, the evidence is abundant that Lady Hamilton repeatedly obtained pardons for rebels, and throughout those tragic weeks was an influence making for mercy towards offenders.

Had I come on contrary evidence I should publish it for the sake of the truth, that is above all things requisite in personal history. In the total absence of such qualifying testimony, I declare confidently that, throughout her stay in Naples Bay, Lady Hamilton was as miserable about and pitiful for the wretched rebels as so sensitive and compassionate a woman could not have failed to be, under all the circumstances of the doleful case.

Lord Keith having left the Mediterranean to follow the combined fleets, that had withdrawn to Brest, Nelson was appointed to the chief command of the Mediterranean station during Lord Keith's absence; the letter, which thus placed the whole Mediterranean fleet under his control, being dated on the same day as the epistle, in which he was censured by the Admiralty for disobeying his commanding-officer's orders.

To discover how Nelson was slandered by the writers, who represent that, after the recovery of Naples, he spent in luxurious repose at Palermo the time and energies he should have devoted to official service and the interests of his country, readers should ascertain from the dates of his letters and dispatches the fewness of the days he passed in the society of the Hamiltons from the middle of September, 1799, to the middle of April in the following year. Whilst taking measures for the reduction of Malta, the safety of Minorca, the blockade of Cadiz, and the discomfiture of the French in northern Italy, in accordance with his special instructions from the Admiralty, he discharged with characteristic zeal and thoroughness all the multifarious duties of the chief command of the Mediterranean fleet till the 6th of January, 1800, when he again placed himself under Lord Keith's orders. Always an early riser, he was almost incessantly at work upon his burdensome and multifarious correspondence from breakfast to supper. At the close of November, 1799, he could boast that 'he never relaxed from business till 8 o'clock at night,' except on the rare occasions when he attended the Sicilian Court, and that he had 'never but three times put his feet on the ground since December, 1798.' On ceasing to act as Lord Keith's *locum tenens*, he returned to his subordinate command with undiminished zeal for the interests of the service. His visits to Palermo in the earlier months of 1800 were few and brief; and it has yet to be shown that he ever passed two or three days with his friends on shore, when he should have been at sea. If he sailed

for Palermo on the 16th of January, 1800, for one of these 'short vacations' in the society of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, he joined Lord Keith in the Leghorn Roads on the 20th, and was sailing with him on the 25th of the same month. His run to Palermo in the following month—a trip made in the company of his Commander-in-Chief—was for a longer stay, but the brief period of recreation may be called a flying visit. Coming with Lord Keith to Palermo on the 3rd of February, Nelson, on that occasion, loitered with his friends ashore for eight days. Had he just then been more eager for pleasure than thoughtful for duty, he would have prolonged the visit, so as to keep the ever-glorious Valentine's Day in the society of the witty old man and rarely-beautiful woman, with whom he had been so closely and peculiarly associated during the last seventeen months. But he went off for sea on the 11th of February, 1800, in good trim and humour for the gallant affair, with which he may be said to have closed the fighting part of his first grand term of Mediterranean service. On the 13th of February, 1800, he was off Messina and writing to Lady Hamilton: 'To say how I miss your house and company would be saying little; but in truth you and Sir William have so spoiled me, that I am not happy anywhere else but with you, nor have I an idea that I ever can be.' Five days later (Tuesday, 18th February) he was chasing the French ship of the line, *Le Généreux*—the ship of 74 guns that had escaped from the Battle of the Nile—together with the *Guillaume Tell* and two frigates. The smart

chase and brilliant capture of *Le Généreux* have been celebrated by several writers, but the story is best told in Nelson's Journal:

'Tuesday 18th. . . . . From 8 to noon in full chase of a French ship of the line, and three frigates fast up. Pray God we may get alongside of them; the event I leave to Providence. I think if I can take one 74 by myself, I would retire, and give the staff to more able hands. 1 o'clock, can see the line of battle ship's upper ports; but we are not coming up with her so fast as I could wish. At 10 minutes past 4, P.M. the *Success* frigate fired a broadside in raking the French ship, and the *Foudroyant* fired two guns at her, on which she fired two broadsides and struck her colours—proved to be *Le Généreux* of 74 guns, Rear-Admiral Perrée, with 600 troops on board for Malta. Thank God.'

In this affair the giant fell to the dwarf; for, though *Le Généreux* struck to the British Admiral's flagship, she did not surrender till the plucky little frigate *Success* had shot away the French Admiral's legs, and made his vessel an easy conquest to the *Northumberland* and *Foudroyant*. It was not Nelson's fault that he missed his chance of taking the '74 by himself.' He had crowded every inch of canvas in the chase, and done his utmost to make the glory of the affair all his own. For what he failed to do, he was consoled by the mark of honour which a shot from *Le Généreux* had put on the *Foudroyant's* mizen-staysail. In every other respect Nelson had cause to be satisfied with the day's work. By escaping from the rout and havoc of Aboukir Bay, *Le Généreux* had earned Nelson's cordial and reasonable resentment. She was taken in the act of conveying troops and provisions to Malta. The large store-ship that was

captured together with *Le Généreux*, 'had on board two thousand troops, with provisions and ammunition for the relief of La Valetta.' Had Nelson been an ordinary admiral, he would have prided himself vastly on the record of this 18th of February. Even to the hero of the Nile it was an affair to be spoken of with self-complacence. In that vein he wrote of it, on the 26th of February, 1800, to the Imperial and Majestic Paul, Emperor of all the Russias, who, as Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem at Malta, had recently made himself honourable to the British Admiral by decorating Lady Hamilton with the Little Cross of devotion of the said Order. For the more perfect elucidation of Lady Hamilton's curious story, one would fain know more of the particulars of the services for which she was, through Nelson's influence, rewarded with the decoration which caused Captain Ball to style her a 'Chanoiness of St. John of Jerusalem.' That she was so decorated because Nelson thought she ought to be so decorated, and asked the Emperor so to decorate her, is well-known. It appears also from a letter, which he addressed to the Emperor on the 31st of October, 1799, that Nelson deemed her entitled to the distinction on account of her exertions in procuring a supply of food for the starving Maltese, at a time when the supply was needful for keeping them well affected to the forces that were blockading the French in Valetta. At the close of his long letter to the Emperor, who had been recently constituted Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, Nelson said,

'The laborious task of keeping the Maltese quiet in Malta, through difficulties which your Majesty will perfectly understand, has been principally brought about by the goodness of her Majesty, the Queen of Naples, who at one moment of distress sent £7,000, belonging absolutely to herself and children, by the exertion of Lady Hamilton, the wife of Sir William Hamilton, my gracious Sovereign's Minister to the Court of the Two Sicilies, whom your Majesty knows personally, and by the bravery and conciliating manners of Captain Ball. If your Majesty honours these two persons with the decoration of the Order, I can answer, none ever more deserved the Cross, and it will be grateful to the feelings of your Majesty's most faithful and devoted servant,

'BRONTE NELSON.'

Thus asked for, the decorations were of course immediately granted to Lady Hamilton and Captain Ball by the Emperor, who was of course well pleased to oblige the British Admiral so easily, and at the same time do what might confirm the Order's not unquestionable title to the island of Malta. The point to be observed is that, whilst commending Maria Caroline for giving £7,000 for the relief of the Maltese, Nelson only commended Lady Hamilton for 'exertion' in behalf of the islanders. The application to the Emperor was no doubt made by Nelson with Lady Hamilton's knowledge and approval. If, therefore, Lady Hamilton gave a large sum of money for the relief of the Maltese, Nelson could not well have been ignorant of the fact, and knowing it would scarcely have failed to mention it in the petition for her proper reward.

It is needful to look into this matter, because a few years later, when she had talked herself into

believing strange and unreal things of her doings in Italy, Lady Hamilton put forward her great munificence to the starving Maltese as one of the reasons why she ought to have a national pension.

The account given by Pettigrew of Lady Hamilton's beneficence to the starving Maltese is to this effect. In 1799, when Nelson was away from Palermo with his naval force, seeking for the French fleet, there arrived in Sicily six Maltese emissaries, whom Captain (afterwards Sir Alexander) Ball had sent to the capital of the island to confer with Nelson on the state of affairs in Malta. Having Nelson's authority to open his letters and dispatches, and in other ways to act for him during his absence, Lady Hamilton received these Maltese emissaries, opened their letters of credence, and learnt from the deputies that the hunger-goaded Maltese were for food's sake ready to join in any sortie the French might make. On learning how greatly the Maltese were in need of food, Lady Hamilton went down to the port, bought the cargoes of several vessels laden with corn, and hired vessels to carry the grain to Malta. 'To accomplish this, however,' says Pettigrew, 'Lady Hamilton was under the necessity of borrowing a considerable sum, which she repaid with her own private money, and thus expended, as she says, nothing short of £5,000, not a shilling of which, nor the interest, did she ever get returned.' According to Pettigrew, this service enabled Captain Ball to hold his ground in Malta.

What is the truth of this story? That at the time alluded to Lady Hamilton was directly and personally

instrumental in sending an urgently needed supply of grain to Malta appears from Captain Ball's letters to her and Nelson. That she rendered this service is indisputable, though the importance of the service appears to have been curiously overrated, as the relief she afforded the Maltese by her distinctly commendable action was so slight and transient, that Captain Ball was soon compelled to help himself with a strong hand to the grain lying in the port of Messina, which bold step he would of course have taken at an earlier date, had Lady Hamilton failed to supply his want for the moment. But how about the £5,000 which Lady Hamilton borrowed and eventually repaid out of her own purse, to those who lent it on her security? Of whom did she borrow so large a sum? Nelson did not lend it to her, for he was away from Palermo. Sir William Hamilton could not have lent it to her, for he was just then in urgent straits for ready money. Living at Palermo beyond his income, he had for some time been enabled to maintain his establishment there by Nelson's far from heavy purse. Maria Caroline, who at Lady Hamilton's entreaty provided £7,000 for the needs of the Maltese, certainly did not lend the £5,000 to her. Money-lenders do not lend large sums to women of fashion on no security. Lady Hamilton's privy purse consisted of her modest allowance of £200 a year. So late as last July, she had been spelling for a gift of new raiment from her nephew, Mr. Charles Greville. She could no doubt have pawned her diamonds and two coach-loads of magnificent dresses for a considerable sum. But instead of leaving them in pawn at Sicily, she brought them

to London. How, then, did she get possession of the £5,000, which she in later time declared herself to have spent at this crisis on corn for the Maltese. Had she spent so large a sum in the alleged way, Nelson would certainly have mentioned the fact in his letter to the Emperor Paul. I have no doubt that the story of the £5,000, which Pettigrew with such simple credulity accepted for truth on her 'she says' was either one of those egregious exaggerations or one of those mere fictions, of which Lady Hamilton was so often guilty in her later time, when talking about her services to ungrateful England.

She may possibly have spent five hundred ounces of silver on the Maltese, but she never spent £5,000 upon them. Nelson preserved a copy of his second letter to the Emperor Paul,—the letter, dated February 26th, 1800, in which he thanked the Emperor for conferring the cross of Malta on Lady Hamilton and Captain Ball; and this copy Lady Hamilton (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, p. 329) endorsed with these words of her own writing, 'Lord Whitworth, our then minister at St. Petersburg, had the Emperor's orders to write home that I might be permitted to wear the Order. I not only received the Deputies from Malta, but in a few hours I sent off three ships laden with corn, and got £7,000 from the Queen, *and gave five hundred ounces of my own to relieve them.* Nelson was out with his fleet at that time, looking for the French fleet.' This endorsement is not dated, but it is conclusive evidence that, before she came to imagine she had spent £5,000 on corn for the Maltese, she conceived herself to have given

them only five hundred ounces of silver. It was thus that her services to ungrateful England grew under the excited fancy of the woman, who was so apt to talk herself out of the true view of the proportions of things.

How poor an authority she was in respect to her patriotic services, even in her most deliberate statements about them, appears from what she said of her exertions for Malta and the Maltese in the memorial and petition for a pension, which she addressed to George the Third. In this appeal she spoke of these exertions as 'services with which the Emperor of all the Russias, as your Majesty's Ally, and the Grand Master of Malta, was so perfectly satisfied, that he actually transmitted to your Majesty's humble memorialist, *soon after the surrender of that island*, the title and insignia of Lady of Malta, of the honourable order of the Petite Croix, accompanied by a cross of that order, and a very flattering letter signed by his Imperial Majesty's own hand.' Paul's letter, granting the decoration, was dated on the 21st of December, 1799; Malta was not taken by Major-General Pigot till the 5th of September, 1800. When Lady Hamilton went with Nelson to Malta in the spring of 1800, she wore the Cross of Malta on her breast. During her stay at Malta, she and her companions must have talked daily of the French, who were still holding Valetta. Yet the lady, on whose inexact and contradictory statements successive biographers have placed implicit reliance, a few years later could aver that she was not decorated with the Order of Malta till the island had surrendered.

The King of England having assented to the Emperor Paul's request, that Lady Hamilton should be permitted by her sovereign to wear the decoration, and that her enrolment in the order of Malta should be duly recorded at the College of Arms of her native country, it devolved upon the authorities of the Heralds' College of London to make inquiries respecting the place of her birth and the history of her ancestors. What she said of her father's social condition is not recorded, but she appears to have assigned her birth to a town which she perhaps never visited, and a county that had *not* the honour of producing her. Anyhow, on the 16th of November, 1806 (for the business hung on hand for several years) the widow of the late Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, K.B., received a grant of arms (Per pale Or and Argent, three Lions rampant, Gules on a chief Sable, a Cross of eight points of the second), by Letters Patent that declared her the only issue of Henry Lyons of Preston, in the County of Lancashire, —instead of Great Neston in the County of Cheshire. That in 1806 Lady Hamilton had for some years hailed from Lancashire, appears from several extant letters. On the 21st of February, 1800, John Tyson (Nelson's Secretary and Prize Agent for the *Généreux*), whilst reflecting lightly on the advantages accruing from a Scotch descent to persons doing business with Lord Keith, wrote to her, 'I almost regret that I had not been born a Scotchman, and had not Lancashire produced a Lady Hamilton, whom I am so proud of calling my countrywoman, I do not know, but I might hail from the north of the Tweed.' But I

know of no reference to Lady Hamilton's Lancashire origin, whose date discountenances the suggestion that the inquiries of the Heralds may have determined her to conceal the real place of her nativity. Possibly Sir William Hamilton told the adventuress that she had better hail from the Lancashire town than tell the heralds she was a native of a rural parish, whose register indicated the extreme humility of her extraction. Busybodies, who went to Preston prying for particulars of her domestic story, would take nothing for their pains; but, if she directed them to push their inquiries at Great Neston, they would soon discover enough to satisfy them that the famous Lady Hamilton was the offspring of plebeian parents. Taking this view of the position, Sir William may have instructed his wife to tell the heralds a fib, that could not harm anyone, but might preserve them from a trivial, but slightly humiliating, annoyance. Anyhow, whilst coming upon proof that Lady Hamilton misdescribed her birth-place, soon after she received the Cross of Malta, I find in her papers no evidence that she was guilty of the venial deception before the date of her military decoration.

In assigning her birth to Preston in Lancashire, Henry Lyon's daughter may perhaps have been influenced by the fact that a family named Lyon had formerly flourished at Preston, in Harrow, co. Middlesex. It is conceivable that, when she was looking about for a place and family to which she should attach herself, it was suggested to her she would do well to declare her father akin to the honourably-remembered Founder of Harrow School. If this

suggestion was made to the adventuress by her husband, she may, on consideration, have replied that, as she was known to hundreds of people to have come from the north of England, it would be more prudent for her to hail in heraldic story from Preston in Lancashire than from Preston in Middlesex.

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE.

Nelson at Palermo—Sir William Hamilton's Recall—The Pleasure Trip to Malta—Guests on board the *Foudroyant*—Miss Cornelia Knight—Her Intimacy with Lady Hamilton—Her Character and Testimony—Sir William Hamilton's Confidence in Nelson—'Perfectly Natural Attentions'—Nelson's Disposition to the gentler Sex—His successive Attachments—The Nevis Ladies—Nelson's Love of Fanny Nisbet—His platonic Devotion to Mrs. Moutray—His Marriage—His Friendship for the Hamiltons—Naval and Scandalous Gossip—Lady Hamilton's Influence—Nelson's religious Disposition—His Conception of the Deity—His habitual Piety—Lady Hamilton's unusual Sadness—Causes of her Melancholy—'Come, cheer up, fair Emma'—Sympathy and Passion—The Deplorable Incident.

1800 A.D.

AFTER capturing *Le Généreux*, Nelson went to Malta, to superintend the blockade of Valetta, and remained there till the 10th of March, 1800, when he sailed again for Palermo. 'I was very desirous,' Captain Ball wrote, under that date, to Lady Hamilton, 'that he should prolong his stay, but as I perceive he requires repose and the society of his good friends at Palermo, I rejoice at his going, as the great and important services he has rendered to all Europe, who are enemies to the French, entitle him to every honour and happiness.'

It would have been better for Nelson's fame had he, after staying at Palermo for a few days, taken leave of the Hamiltons, and sailed for England in the ship of war that would, at the close of March or the beginning of April, have been assigned to him for the homeward voyage. He had for the present done his work—the work no other officer could have accomplished so effectually—in the Mediterranean. His presence in the southern sea was no longer required by his country. To all who love and honour his memory,—that is to say, to every child of Great and Greater Britain,—it is therefore a matter for regret, that he did not now escape from the Hamiltons, and make good speed to England for the repose his shattered health so greatly needed. Great men seldom escape great disasters, and sometimes encounter them in matters so trivial or obscure, that they receive less than due historic notice. If the occurrence to which attention must now be called is scarcely to be styled a great disaster, it was at least a grave and lamentable misadventure, for its results did more than any other of the few questionable incidents of his story to lower Nelson in the esteem of a considerable proportion of his fellow-countrymen, and make many excellent people doubtful even now whether the great Admiral should be called a good man. Had it not been for the trip to Malta, which he now made less in the way of duty than of pleasure, Nelson would have escaped this misadventure and its consequent embarrassment and discredit.

By this time, Sir William Hamilton had been super-

seded as British Minister at the Court of the Two Sicilies. There is nothing in the diplomatist's recall to occasion surprise. For years the worn and attenuated veteran had been steadily declining in health and official capacity, though in his brighter hours he was still a delightful companion, overflowing with quaint anecdotes and humorous *jeux d'esprit*. He may be said to have invited his recall, by the frequency with which he had of late written to the Foreign Office, as well as to his private friends in London, of his growing infirmities and need for repose. The veteran who asks for rest is apt to be regarded as longing and asking for retirement. Moreover, there were reasons (of which there is no need to speak) which disposed the British Government to think Sir William Hamilton's place in Southern Italy should be filled by a diplomatist less devoted to Maria Caroline, and less closely associated with her 'party.' Had he not already known himself to be out of favour with his official superiors in London, Sir William Hamilton would have inferred as much from the bearing of the gentleman (the Honourable Arthur Paget) who was sent out from England to supersede him. Observing the signs of Mr. Paget's impatience to present his Letters of Credence to King Ferdinand, Sir William Hamilton also observed the signs of Mr. Paget's significant disinclination to speak with him on the affairs and interests of the King's court and country.

A period having been thus put to Sir William Hamilton's official career, it was natural for Lady Hamilton to wish to visit the home of the knightly

Order to which she had been recently admitted, before she should return to England. To gratify the natural desire of the woman, whom he had now for a year and a half regarded with increasing admiration and tenderness, Nelson invited Sir William and Lady Hamilton, Miss Cornelia Knight, another English lady and gentleman, and an old Maltese nobleman, to accompany him on his flag-ship for a trip, in which he would take them to Syracuse, where, through Lady Hamilton's influence with the Sicilian Queen (as he put the case), he had watered and victualled his ships for the Battle of the Nile, and to the island with whose history Lady Hamilton would for ever be so honourably associated. Of course each of the invitations was accepted. On the 22nd of April, 1800, Sir William Hamilton presented his letters of recall to Their Sicilian Majesties, and on the morrow (if Miss Knight did not err; or on the 24th of April, if Pettigrew is right about the date), the *Foudroyant* sailed from Palermo with the Admiral and his guests on board.

Miss Cornelia Knight, of whose participation in the great flight from Naples to Palermo mention was made in a former chapter, had now been living for several months under Lady Hamilton's roof as well as under her protection. Lady Knight, who had long been an invalid, was fast sinking to death, when Nelson and the Hamiltons went off from Palermo in June, 1799, for their long sojourn in the Bay of Naples. On taking leave of the dying lady on the eve of their departure from Sicily, the British Admiral and the British Minister had both promised her to

take charge of her daughter, and provide for her safe return to England. The promise to the dying mother was of course fulfilled. As soon as Lady Knight had breathed her last breath, worthy Mrs. Cadogan came to assist Miss Knight in the arrangements of the funeral. The funeral over, good Mrs. Cadogan, acting on Lady Hamilton's kindly instructions, carried Miss Knight off to Sir William Hamilton's house; and from that time till she parted with them in London, the Hamiltons cared for the woman of letters as though she had been one of their nearest kindred. From a passage of Lady Hamilton's 19th of July letter to Mr. Charles Greville it appears that, soon after her mother's interment, Miss Knight joined the Hamiltons on board the *Foudroyant*, and there acted as secretary and amanuensis to the lady who was Nelson's interpreter, her husband's secretary, and Maria Caroline's special correspondent and deputy. 'My mother,' Lady Hamilton wrote to her nephew Charles, 'is at Palermo. But I have an English lady with me who is of use to me in writing, and helping to keep papers and things in order.' Anyhow, from the moment of her return from Naples to Palermo, in August 1799, to the hour of her arrival in London, Lady Hamilton had Miss Knight for her daily and confidential companion.

That Miss Knight was a clever woman of the world is certain. Whilst the position she held at the English Court and in English society, after her return to England in 1800, may be regarded as evidence of the sobriety of her taste and manners, it has never been suggested by any of her acquaintance that she was

wanting in womanly discreetness, or indifferent to the social proprieties. From infancy she was trained to value and observe the rules of conventional decorum. By birth, breeding, official employment, and social circumstances she belonged to the kind of women who are most observant of social rules, and the least disposed to think lightly of their infringement. Being a woman of this kind, Miss Knight (*vide* her 'Autobiography'), speaking of the time she spent under the protection of the Hamiltons, remarks: 'There was certainly at that time no impropriety in living under Lady Hamilton's roof. Her house was the resort of the best company of all nations, and the attentions paid to Lord Nelson appeared perfectly natural. He himself always spoke of his wife with the greatest affection and respect.' This testimony by a woman, who had the best opportunity for observing the intercourse of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, when they are supposed by some writers to have been the partners of a shameless and undisguised *liaison*, is noteworthy. It may, of course, be urged against the testimony, that its writer had interested motives in persuading herself and others, that she never connived at improprieties which womanly virtue required her to disapprove. But to this objection it may be replied, that no one has ever ventured to impeach the lady's veracity.

It is also to be remarked that Miss Knight's testimony to the apparent innocence of Nelson's intercourse with Lady Hamilton at this period of their association is confirmed by Sir William Hamilton's treatment of the Admiral, and his enthusiastic

admiration of the hero's moral character. From the autumn of 1798, Sir William Hamilton's delight in Nelson's society was no less remarkable than his wife's enthusiasm for her supreme hero of the British navy. In idolatry of Nelson, the British Minister and his wife went hand in hand. It may not be imagined that, in seizing every occasion for declaring affection for Nelson, and displaying unqualified confidence in his friendship and honour, that Sir William Hamilton was insincere and deceptive. Nothing is more clear in this strange story than, that Sir William Hamilton approved and encouraged his wife's affection for their friend, and to the last neither saw nor suspected evil in it, though in the last two years of his life he was painfully sensitive of the discredit accruing to all three of them from their peculiar association. Had he connived at aught wrong he saw in her attachment to Nelson, the Lady and Admiral would have been cognizant of his insincerity, and after 'the incident' of the unfortunate trip to Malta would not have been at so much needless pains to keep him ignorant of the state of her health, and of Horatia's birth.

At the moment considerably subsequent to his return to England, when he was charging her with neglecting him in her excessive care for their friend's interest, and was so far at war with her as to threaten her with 'separation,' the poor old man paused in his outbreak of petulance and splenetic jealousy to avow his undiminished confidence, that her affection for their hero was purely platonic. To the last, Sir William Hamilton believed Nelson had never done him dishonour. Giving utterance to this belief in

a testamentary codicil, which he executed shortly before his death, Sir William was soothed in his dying illness by Nelson's personal ministrations, and while expiring in his wife's arms lay with his right hand in the sailor's remaining hand.

Though he had been failing for years, Sir William Hamilton to the last hour of his Italian career was a keen-witted, observant, and, by fits and starts, energetic old man. Moreover, though his moral nature had been lowered by the social usages and tone of the southern capital, in which he passed so large a portion of his life, they had not depraved and 'italianated' him into being capable, in his old age, of playing to Nelson the part that Count Guiccioli a few years later played to Byron. Holding to the main lines and laws of English chivalry, he had ever been sensitive for his dignity and title to the world's esteem; and in his failing years a sensitive man's jealousy for his honour seldom diminishes with his ability to defend it. That Sir William Hamilton detected nothing to resent in his wife's show of regard for Nelson is evidence that, having regard to Lady Hamilton's emotional demonstrativeness, Miss Knight was justified in saying the attentions 'appeared perfectly natural.'

It being part of her charming naturalness to say what she thought and to show what she felt, we may be sure that Lady Hamilton made no secret of her admiration of Nelson, but displayed it to all their common acquaintance by words and looks that, in the case of any other woman, would have been remarkable. But the show of feeling, which conduced to

Josiah Nisbet's unmannerly outbreak at the birthday-fête, was an exhibition of Nelsomania, that appeared 'perfectly natural' to Miss Knight, who was accustomed to Lady Hamilton's ways, and altogether delightful and commendable to the idolatrous husband, who admired everything his wife said or did.

On the other hand, Nelson was in a different way no less communicative to the lady, and to all who saw them together, of his delight in her beauty, her cordial speech, and her several fascinating accomplishments. Few naval officers of his period were less qualified by nature to charm the gentler sex than Nelson, who, whilst ever ready to worship them in silence, was singularly deficient in the personal endowments and colloquial readiness, that are a man's best passports to feminine favour. Winningly agreeable to officers of 'the service' when the talk over the walnuts and wine turned on naval matters, Nelson, with his small stature, lank hair, long visage, faulty costume, and general quaintness of appearance, was never seen to advantage in a drawing-room where men and women amused one another with trifles; his several personal disqualifications for scenes of graceful frivolity being on such occasions rendered especially conspicuous by a shyness, that was chiefly due to constitutional infirmity, and a rusticity that was referable to Norfolk. The great Admiral, whose *gaucheries* and solecisms caused Mrs. Trench so much amusement at Dresden, was something less homely and maladroit in the society of unfamiliar womankind than the young Captain Nelson of the *Boreas*, whose taciturnity and bluntness caused

the Nevis ladies some three-and-twenty years earlier to question whether the 'superior mind,' that now and then revealed itself in his occasional sallies of startling communicativeness, was an altogether sound mind. After vainly essaying to lure him into sociability, and put herself mentally face to face with him, one of these charming creoles came to the conclusion, that the likeliest woman of all her acquaintance to know how to handle so perplexing a naval officer was a certain Fanny Nisbet, whose husband had himself died mad after showing great skill and tact in the treatment of insane patients. 'If you, Fanny, had been there,' the fair and vivacious Creole wrote to Mrs. Nisbet, 'we think you would have made something of him; for you have been in the habit of attending to these odd sort of people.'

To the Nevis ladies, Captain Nelson's taciturnity was the more curious and perplexing, because his disinclination to talk evenly and steadily with them could not be suspected of proceeding from dislike of them, as he was at much pains to give them opportunities for talking to him, and was clearly well pleased to sit with them and regard them with respectful curiosity for hours at a time, whilst they gossipped vivaciously to one another. Just as in later time the Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet used to sail for Palermo to see the Hamiltons, the young captain of the *Boreas* used to run into Nevis harbour, to dine once and again at President Herbert's table, pass one or two long evenings in listening silently to the prattle of the President's daughter and niece, and in the same tranquil fashion spend a few

hours with the ladies in the President's garden. On discovering that the seaman's alternate silence and brusquerie were wholly innocent of intentional rudeness, and on the contrary covered and revealed by turns a flattering measure of personal esteem, Fanny Nisbet (still a young thing in her twenty-third year, though she was the widow of the late Josiah Nisbet, a Scotch M.D., who had followed his profession as a general practitioner at Coventry, Co. Warwick, before emigrating to the West Indies), came to the sensible conclusion that, as he was one of 'the odd sort of people' who like to show their love without talking much about it, she had better say 'yes' to one of the 'occasional sallies of his superior mind.' So, after conference between the silent suitor and President Herbert about ways and means, and a correspondence on the same financial question between the taciturn sailor and his uncle William Suckling of Norfolk, and a year-and-a-half's prolongation of the engagement, during which the seaman said very little, but seized every opportunity of surveying his Fanny and listening to her small talk with Miss Herbert, the marriage of Horatio the silent and Fanny Nisbet was duly celebrated at Nevis, to the satisfaction of all parties in any way concerned in the matter, on the 12th of March, 1787, in the presence of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, Nelson being then in his twenty-ninth year, whilst Fanny Nisbet was still in her twenty-fourth year.

But though he wooed her thus silently, it is not to be inferred that Nelson won his wife without showing abundant devotion to her, or that their union

was wanting in romantic attachment on either side. 'Her personal accomplishments, you will suppose,' he wrote, at the beginning of his engagement to President Herbert's niece, 'I think equal to any person's I ever saw; but, without vanity, her mental accomplishments are superior to most people's of either sex; and we shall come together as two persons most sincerely attached to each other from friendship.' Writing to an uncle on so delicate a subject, Nelson would have violated old-fashioned propriety had he written more warmly of his passion for the lovely young woman, whom he extolled for her mental endowments, whilst declaring her comparable for personal attractiveness with any person he had ever seen. She was young, beautiful, clever, but poor, and of no distinguished family. What motive but love can Nelson have had for making her an offer? The cordial affectionateness, with which he wrote to her from sea from 1793 to 1800, shows that he loved her. If the comparative strength of his attachment to Fanny Nisbet and his subsequent attachment to Lady Hamilton up to 1801 is to be measured by the sentiment of the letters he addressed to the ladies, the earlier attachment must be declared the stronger. It is the fashion of Lady Nelson's detractors to speak of her letters to her husband as weak and colourless effusions, but they were certainly more nervous and eloquent of womanly devotedness than the epistles he received from Lady Hamilton. It is, however, more important to consider Nelson's letters to his wife. How did he write to her? To peruse the letters Nelson sent his wife from Italy up to the spring of

1800, is to see that he was animated by steady and chivalric affection for her.

Before he fell under the influence of Fanny Nisbet in the autumn of 1785, Nelson was swayed for several months by a virtuous attachment for Mrs. Moutray, wife of the commissioner at Antigua, the charming woman to whom Collingwood, another of her naval admirers in the season of Nelson's tenderest regard for her, wrote the lines,

> 'To you belongs the wondrous art
> To shed around you pleasure;
> New worth to best of things impart,
> And make of trifles—treasure.'

Of this lovely and amiable creature Nelson wrote from Antigua to Captain Locker on the 24th of September, 1784, 'Was it not for Mrs. Moutray, who is *very, very* good to me, I should almost hang myself at this infernal hole,' adding, 'Our admiral is tolerable, but I do not like him: he bows and scrapes too much for me; his wife has an eternal clack, so that I go near them as little as possible.' When Mrs. Moutray was preparing to return to England, Nelson wrote to his brother William these words of hope that their sister Kate (afterwards Mrs. Matcham of Ashford Lodge) would make the acquaintance of the incomparable lady, and profit by intercourse with so rare an example of feminine grace and goodness. 'If my dear Kate goes to Bath next winter, she will be known to her; for my dear friend has promised to make herself known. What an acquisition to any female to be acquainted with: what an example to take pattern from.'

Nelson's admiration of Commissioner Moutray's wife was preceded by his brief passion for the young lady, whose acquaintance he made at St. Omer (France) in the autumn of 1783, and whom he would have married had circumstances favoured his sentimental disposition. At Quebec in the previous year, as Captain Nelson of the *Albemarle* (twenty-eight guns), he was saved by his friend Davidson from what would have been an imprudent, if not absolutely disastrous, match with a young woman who had for some months been the holder of his heart.

The evidence is therefore conclusive that, though she had not in other respects fitted him for the part of lady-killer, nature had endowed him with a disposition to regard women worshipfully, and to seek happiness in their society. From early manhood to his last hour he showed himself more than ordinarily susceptible of feminine influence. It is also to be observed that the successive passions, which stirred him in his earlier time, were virtuous attachments. His desire was to marry the young woman, from whose thraldom he was rescued in his twenty-fourth year by Alexander Hamilton's fortunate intervention. The girl whom he would fain have won and appears to have wooed ineffectually at St. Omer in 1784 (his twenty-sixth year), was an English clergyman's daughter, of good family and connections. Though Southey may have been justified in suggesting that the suitor in this affair would have been more persistent, had his passion been so lively as to render him indifferent to prudential considerations, the affair was at least significant of the young man's

friendly disposition to the gentler sex. Whilst cruising in the Leeward Islands, from March 1784 to March 1787 (from his twenty-sixth to his thirtieth year) the young captain lived under the influence of virtuous gentlewomen,—first under the gentle sway of Mrs. Moutray, whom he regarded as a woman his favourite sister would do well to imitate in all things, and then under the even more delightful dominion of the two ladies of President Herbert's household, one of whom became his wife when he was twenty-nine years of age.

That he married Fanny Nisbet (some six years his junior) for love, and lived happily with her on narrow means, whilst he was waiting in England for another ship from December 1787 to January 1793, is certain. The letters he wrote to her from the Mediterranean afford abundant evidence that he regarded her tenderly and loyally, long after the time to which the birth of his passion for Lady Hamilton has been assigned by successive biographers. During his first stay at Naples (in 1793), though necessarily observant of her personal charms, and delighted by her frank and hearty bearing, Nelson regarded Lady Hamilton without perilous enthusiasm as 'a young woman of amiable manners, who did honour to the station to which she had been raised,' and who had laid him and his wife under a considerable obligation by her 'wonderful kindness and goodness to Josiah.'

Whilst he was under surgical and medical treatment in England, from an early day of September 1797 to the 1st of April of 1798, he found in his Fanny the dear wife, from whose love his heart had

never strayed, since he bade her 'fare-well' in the January of 1793. Even to the midsummer of 1798, Lady Hamilton was nothing more to him than the very charming young woman, who had been kind to him and good to his wife's boy, in the autumn of '93.

The case, no doubt, was different from the first day after his return to Naples in the September of 1798. As he sailed in the *Vanguard* from Egypt to the Sicily, after fortune and his own rare valour and seamanlike genius had made him the most glorious Admiral of Britain's navy, he thought gratefully of Sir William Hamilton's lovely wife, as the woman who had helped him to water and victual his ships at Syracuse, and to start with the greatest possible expedition on his second search for Buonaparte's fleet. The emotional vehemence, with which she embraced him and wetted his furrowed cheeks with her tears at their re-union on board the *Vanguard*, must have affected him deeply for many a day after the outbreak of womanly agitation and tenderness, and may be presumed to have influenced in various ways his subsequent demeanour towards her. It should be remembered that this equally passionate and subduing welcome was accorded to her hero by Lady Hamilton in the presence, and to the manifest approval, of her own husband,—a fact, that may well have disposed Nelson to take the most generous and unsuspicious view of her subsequent exhibitions of affectionate concern for him. It was also from Sir William Hamilton's own lips that Nelson learnt, how she fell senseless from too violent joy on receiving too abruptly the news of his glorious victory. Thus schooled and

encouraged by Sir William Hamilton to view without alarm or sinister apprehension the vehement emotionality, that would otherwise have astonished and troubled him, it is not wonderful that the hero attributed the lady's undisguised idolatry of his merits to the innocent fervour and frankness of an exceptionally enthusiastic nature. In justice to Lady Hamilton it should be also believed, that at least for many months after Nelson's return to Italy, possibly almost to the hour of her husband's official connection with the Two Sicilies, she was animated by no reprehensible motive in paying Nelson the attentions, which even before the end of September was a chief cause of Josiah Nisbet's unmannerly outbreak against his step-father, and soon afterwards gave rise to scandalous rumours throughout the squadron.

By naval officers, unfamiliar with Lady Hamilton's peculiarities—her 'charming naturalness' and habitual demonstrativeness of approval to new friends and slight acquaintances—the attentions, which appeared innocent and 'perfectly natural' to Miss Knight, may well have been regarded as significant of mischief and wickedness. In thus regarding them, the gentlemen of the British ships were necessarily influenced by the reputation of the woman, who had been Sir William Hamilton's mistress. They cannot be blamed for judging unfairly and too hastily the celebrated Beauty, stories of whose 'former dissolute life' (to use Mrs. Trench's expression) were current everywhere. But they would have been less quick to condemn her demeanour to the Admiral, had they been as well qualified as Miss Knight to regard it

charitably. On the other hand, they would have been slower to think their Admiral over head and ears in love with the Patroness of the Navy, and to laugh at the suggestion that his manifest liking for her might be platonic, had they known how some twelve or thirteen years since he used to worship Mrs. Moutray. In like manner, had they known how whilst cruising about the Leeward Islands he used to run into Antigua and Nevis for social intercourse with his friends in those islands, the gentlemen of the navy would in 1799 and 1800 have been better qualified to take a just view of his occasional and brief visits to the Hamiltons at Palermo.

There can be no question that, from the first hour of his visit to Naples in September 1798, Nelson showed a strong liking and admiration for Lady Hamilton. The manner of the seaman, guileless by nature and little given to concealment, showed he was charmed by her. But to say of him, as Southey does, that he was infatuated by the woman, who never lured or tried to lure him into negligence of his duty to his King and country, is to be libellous. It would have been strange had he not admired and delighted in her. For though she had in September 1798 survived the brief perfection of her personal charms, she was still a singularly beautiful creature. She had fattened so as to lose much of her earlier grace and shapeliness, but hers was a form to endure considerable disfigurement from such a cause and yet remain greatly attractive. In all its features her countenance was a memorable type of the kind of feminine beauty, that accepts most graciously the

enlargement of *embonpoint*. In truth, to a few *connoisseurs* of womanly attractiveness she had in some respects been improved by what had so greatly diminished her former elegance and delicate winsomeness. Younger than Nelson by something over four years, she was in her early middle-age a superb example of the kind of beauty, that was known to be especially fascinating to the Prince of Wales. At Dresden, in 1800, Mr. Elliot predicted that she would captivate the prince, and so play a great part in England. Her singing was as good as it had ever been. Her famous 'attitudes' at this period of her career are admitted, even by the hypercritical and censorious Mrs. Trench, to have been 'a beautiful performance, amusing to the most ignorant, and highly interesting to lovers of art.' To Nelson, ever more apt at listening than talking to women, the frank, cheery, cordial, piquant gossip of the beautiful woman was in the highest degree diverting and animating. Sometimes racily clever, never brainless, it satisfied the Admiral's robust intellect in his hours of relaxation. To a man so remarkable for sincerity and simplicity, the charming naturalness and candour of her small talk were delightful. Though she was capable of artifice, and occasionally in her later time of deliberate and unqualified falsehood, Lady Hamilton was still in the main the same frank, outspoken, indiscreetly communicative creature she had ever been. Observing how, in her practice of putting into words whatever was uppermost in her mind, she so often revealed what a woman of ordinary caution would have been at great pains to conceal, he conceived her to be

genuine and guileless. Observing the kindliness with which she spoke of other people, he credited her with amiability, which he did not greatly exaggerate. Finding so much to approve and admire in the woman, who admired him, and had a claim on his gratitude, he naturally delighted in her society. All his reasons for liking her were reasons why the former worshipper of the unimpeachably virtuous Mrs. Moutray desired to worship Emma Hamilton, and enjoy her friendship in the same platonic way.

It should also be borne in mind that, whilst regarding Lady Hamilton with cordial admiration, Nelson cherished a similar sentiment for her husband. Whilst Nelson's letters afford abundant evidence that he respected the Minister for his attainments, and found him a most congenial companion, Sir William Hamilton's letters yield conclusive testimony that he was not surpassed by his wife in enthusiastic idolatry of the naval hero. Combining to worship him, the minister and his wife were the equal sharers of the affectionate regard with which Nelson repaid their demonstrations of friendship. On hearing of the Earl's illness, Nelson wrote to Lord St. Vincent from Palermo on the 12th of June, 1799: 'Let me entreat you to come to us . . . . . If you are sick, I will fag for you, and our dear Lady Hamilton will nurse you with the most affectionate attention. Good Sir William will make you laugh with his wit and inexhaustible pleasantry; we all love you; come, then, to your sincere friends.' It was thus, at least, for a considerable period, that the husband and wife were associated by Nelson as the two objects and equal

sharers of the one affection he had for them. That he thought Sir William's 'wit and inexhaustible pleasantry' would tend to restore the Commander-in-chief to health, shows how greatly Nelson enjoyed them. Another consideration, which cannot have failed to dispose Nelson to like Lady Hamilton's husband, was that the Minister had recognised his heroism before he won his place amongst the world's acknowledged heroes. After winning his peerage, the conqueror of the Nile found many worshippers. But Sir William Hamilton had predicted his future greatness before it was achieved, and predicting had honoured it. Lodging him in the apartment that had been prepared for a prince, he had declared in '93 that Captain Nelson of the *Agamemnon* would 'one day astonish the world,' and 'become the greatest man that ever England produced.' Coming from such a man as Sir William Hamilton, the flattering prophecy bedded itself and turned to gratitude in the heart of Nelson,—still an undistinguished man. Of course, readers know how much policy and diplomatic design had to do with Sir William Hamilton's graciousness to Captain Nelson in '93; but it was not in Nelson's generous and grateful nature to take account of the design, or even to suspect it. It was enough for him to remember that Sir William had befriended and applauded him, when he had few friends and no title to applause. Remembering this of Sir William Hamilton, Nelson loved him for it. Thus the minister and the naval hero became friends, and in 1798 were friends in no common sense of the word.

Forgetting for the moment that these two men

were cordially sympathetic and strongly attached friends, that Nelson held to old-world sentiments of honour, and that he was averse to ordinary libertinism, the biographers who insist that he threw himself precipitately into a vicious *liaison* with Lady Hamilton, and was infatuated by his love of her from the September of '98, or even from the September of '93, overlook also that he was an earnestly religious man, thinking of the Deity very much as the seventeenth-century puritans thought of the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. Though in moments of excitement he used to rattle forth an idle storm of oaths in sailor-like fashion, Nelson was at every stage of his career a devout and prayerful man. The courage, which Buonaparte drew from belief in fate and his star, came to Nelson from a simple and unwavering belief in the omnipresence of the ever watchful God Almighty, who, using his creatures for wise and merciful ends, punished for their misdeeds, and regarded them favourably in proportion to their righteousness. On the eve of battle he used to fall on his knees and entreat God to guard him in the coming perils, and give him the victory. If he came unscathed out of the fray, he attributed the escape to the beneficence of the personal God who, with an omnipotent right hand, had changed the course of deadly missiles or kept him out of their way. When his ship was shattered and his fleet driven to confusion by the wide-sweeping hurricane, he regarded the storm as the rod with which the Almighty had chastised his insolence. He had no sooner fought the glorious fight of Aboukir than he called upon his

sea-mates to join him in returning thanks to God, who had given them the victory. Was a man of this sort likely to violate his most solemn notions of right on the first temptation to error, and to join lightly in a guilty league with his friend's wife, because she smiled upon him and proclaimed him her supreme hero?

My opinion, held as strongly as a reasonable opinion may be held in the absence of conclusive evidence, is that the incident, that resulted in Horatia's birth, was preceded in the course of Nelson's friendship for Lady Hamilton by no similar occurrence. The reader should believe that until this lamentable misadventure, and also for a considerable period after their deviation from the way of virtue, the friendship of the famous and almost faultless man for the celebrated and far from faultless woman was what is ordinarily called a platonic attachment.

Though she was little given to despondency, and anticipated pleasure from the trip, it is not surprising that Lady Hamilton came on board the *Foudroyant* and passed the first days of the excursion in low spirits. She had cause for dejection. Her husband had just ceased to be British Minister at the court, where she had now for so long a term played a brilliant part. The future could scarcely afford her a time of triumph, so flattering to her pride and fruitful of enjoyments as the passage of her career, to which his recall would soon put an end. On leaving Italy she would separate, probably for ever, from numerous friends who were dear to her. No longer a queen's darling and daily associate,

she would no longer be the delight and admiration of a royal circle. The joys that were passing from her could not be followed by equal pleasures, and possibly might not soon be replaced by moderate contentment. Old things were passing from her, and the new might yield her only sadness. In England she might be received with coldness,—might even be avoided and shunned, through the influence of her enemies, whom she knew to be numerous, though she had been at so much pains to make friends of all sorts and conditions of men. Whilst things around her were thus changing, she thought of the change in herself. Though every mirror told her she was still beautiful, her former beauty had passed from her. How long would her present beauty last? By what would it be succeeded? In a few years her failing husband would be dead; and then, a few years later, she who had so long been the brightest beauty of a court, might be leading a stupid and uneventful existence, with waning charms and few admirers, on a narrow income. The gloomiest feature of the near prospect was that she and Nelson must part. Possibly in a few weeks, certainly in a few months, she and he would be going different ways. He in the pursuit of glory would be winning honours in which his wife would participate, whilst Sir William Hamilton's widow would be falling out of the world's view. To think thus was the bitterness of despair to the woman of pleasure; for by this time, if Nelson's regard for her was nothing more than tender friendship, her regard for him was love.

The woman, who had for years lived joyously in the present, may well have lost her usual gaiety, when events compelled her to think thus of the future. To dispel the dejection which possessed her friend, Miss Cornelia Knight wrote the song that a few hours later was sung at the Admiral's dinner-table:

'Come, cheer up, fair Emma! forget all thy grief,
For thy shipmates are brave, and a Hero's their chief.
Look round on these trophies, the pride of the main;
They were snatched by their valour from Gallia and Spain.

Behold yonder fragment: 'tis sacred to fame;
Midst the waves of old Nile it was sav'd from the flame—
The flame that destroy'd the new glories of France,
When Providence vanquish'd the friends of blind Chance.

Those arms the *San Joseph* once claimed as their own,
Ere Nelson and Britons her pride had o'erthrown.
That plume, too, evinces that still they excel—
It was torn from the cap of the famed William Tell.

Then cheer up, fair Emma! remember thou'rt free,
And ploughing Britannia's old empire, the sea,
How many in Albion each sorrow would check,
Could they kiss but one plank of this conquering deck.'

The trophies alluded to in the verses were the carving in wood of the feathers taken from the cap of the figure-head of the *Guillaume Tell*, four muskets taken from the *San Joseph*, and the flag-staff of *L'Orient*, that were the chief ornaments of the *Foudroyant's* state cabin, which was well-provided with new books of *belle lettres* and magazines sent out to her husband by Lady Nelson.

Whilst Miss Knight was composing this song, to be sung on the thirty-seventh anniversary of fair Emma's birthday, Nelson may be conceived to have troubled himself not a little with thinking what he could do to rescue his dear Lady Hamilton from the

grip of sorrow. The more than ordinary tenderness, with which her manifest dejection caused him to think of her, may have been one of the forces that rendered him the prey and victim of the sudden and irresistible impulse of Passion, that was followed by the birth of Horatia at some hour between the beginning of the 29th and the close of the 31st of January, 1801.

If the passion, which occasioned this incident, operated under all circumstances with the same force and intensity in all human beings, and if all creatures of human kind were endowed with one uniform and known power of resisting it, we might by careful examination of circumstances be able to state in a large number of cases the degree in which a person is culpable and deserving of reprobation, for yielding to an impulse to break the seventh commandment. As it is, one can do little more than say confidently that, whilst in the greater majority of cases the misdoer yields with greater or less reluctance or readiness to a power, with which he might and therefore should have battled successfully, there is a minority of cases in which the wanderer from the right path is no more accountable for his error than the wretched man who in madness slays himself, or the miserable mother who, in puerperal phrensy, kills her own infant. Burns wrote wisely and well,

> 'Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord, its various tone—
> Each spring, its various bias.
> Then at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it.
> What's done we partly can compute,
> But know not what's resisted.'

Few fair though severe judges of Nelson's violation of a sacred law will hesitate in saying it was an offence, surrounded with extenuating circumstances, that, whilst pointing to the vehemence of the assault to which he succumbed, must have reduced beneath the normal standard his power of resisting the fiercest and most unruly of passions.

Whilst his character and whole story declare that, in respect to this affair, he should not be judged as one might fairly judge an ordinary worldling and pleasure-seeker, the known facts of his position towards his own wife on the one hand, and towards Lady Hamilton on the other hand, proclaim that at the worst his first error was a mere momentary frailty. With the exception of the few months which he passed in her society in 1797—8, the sailor had in the April of 1800 been absent from his wife for more than seven years. Absence is said to make the heart grow fonder; and there is no evidence that it had not quickened and strengthened Nelson's affection for his wife. But the length of the absence is to be pondered by those who would view Nelson rightly in respect to this regrettable business. The long period had, moreover, been passed by him in a series of labours and perilous exploits, each of which had occasioned him the intensest excitement. The strict domestic orderliness, that may be fairly looked for in a man who lives habitually in a tranquil home with a congenial mate, is not to be demanded of the man who, at the period of life when the physical energies are usually at their fulness, passes his time year after year in laborious and intensely agitating services,

far away from the shrine of his familiar affections.

In the April of 1800, Nelson had during the previous year-and-half seen much of Lady Hamilton, and throughout that time his brotherly liking for the woman, to whom he deemed himself under great obligations, had steadily increased. Admiring her beauty and delighting in her conversation, he had studied her character and satisfied himself that she was a woman of good sense and generous nature, who had several strong claims to his confidence and affection. She had worked for him with her brain and pen. Lightening his labours and lessening his anxieties, she had more than once nursed him when he was sick. During the several weeks of their residence on board the *Foudroyant* in Naples Bay, the silent admirer of womankind, who from his youth had been finely susceptible of feminine influence, may well have felt tenderly for the woman with whom he found himself so closely and strangely associated. And now, whilst himself thinking sadly of their approaching severance, and of the probability that they would pass away from one another, and remain apart till a French shot should end his life, he found the hitherto bright and joyous creature subdued to sadness by corresponding thought. What wonder that out of this sympathy there arose currents of tempestuous emotion, which neither she nor he could for the moment either resist or escape from?

When a man of principle and honour is tempted to act towards another man's wife as Nelson acted in the spring of 1800 towards Lady Hamilton, his power to resist the temptation is usually increased

by thought for the injury his action may do the woman's character, by regard for the dishonour it may do her husband, by care for the shame it may put on her existing children, and by concern for the discredit it may cast over the family that gave her birth. Whilst two of these considerations were necessarily in no high degree operative on Nelson, the other two cannot have affected him in any great degree. Lady Hamilton came of no family, whose social dignity and credit could be lowered by her conduct. Though she had children, or at least had given birth to children, Nelson—as it will soon appear from a letter he wrote her in 1801—was unaware of the fact. The social discredit that could under any circumstances accrue to Sir William Hamilton from the infidelity of the wife, who had formerly been his mistress, would be small. Any injury that would ensue to the reputation of a woman of Lady Hamilton's notorious career from another scandalous error would be scarcely appreciable.

Hence, whilst the temptation to which Nelson succumbed was exceptionally strong, he was unsustained by the considerations that would have aided him to combat it, had Lady Hamilton's domestic story and personal antecedents accorded with the social place to which she had risen. I am not arguing that there was nothing to reprehend or regret in Nelson's momentary submission to an overpowering impulse of passion. There was something in the affair to blame, and very much to deplore. But to apply harsh epithets to the transient weakness and momentary error is to be wanting in historic discretion and

human justice. The connoisseur who mistakes a fly-fleck on a work of art for a material blemish is less at fault than the moral censor, who discovers the evidence of deep-seated depravity in the mere record of a generous indiscretion.

In consequence of adverse winds and difficulty in threading the Straits of Messina, the *Foudroyant* made a slow passage to the port, where Nelson watered his ships before taking them for a second run to Egypt. Landing at Syracuse on the 1st of May, 1800, the pleasure-party spent two days on the sights of the ancient city, before moving onwards to the blockading squadron off the island, which the Lady of the Little Cross was glad to visit. Joining the squadron in the evening of the 3rd of May, they spent sixteen or seventeen days either on Malta or cruising in Maltese waters, when on the 19th or 20th of the same month (Pettigrew and Miss Knight differ as to the day) they began the return voyage, carrying with them pleasant memories of Captain Ball's dinners, and of the hospitalities lavished upon them at General Graham's quarters. In the last day of May they were back again at Palermo, whence Nelson was under promise to convey Maria Caroline and four of her children to Leghorn.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HERO AT HOME.

From Palermo to Leghorn—Maria Caroline and her Children at Leghorn—Parting Gifts—The Livornese in Commotion—Across the Peninsula—From Ancona to Trieste—The Triumphal Progress—Rejoicings at Vienna—Hospitality at Eisenstadt—Adieu to Maria Caroline—A Thousand a-Year—Welcome to Prague—From Prague to Dresden—A Rebuff to Lady Hamilton—A Menace to the Elector—Lady Hamilton's indiscreet Talkativeness—The Departure from Dresden—The Hamiltons amuse themselves—Waiting at Hamburgh—The Landing at Great Yarmouth—Nelson in his Native County—To London *viâ* Ipswich—Dispersion of the Party—The Meeting at Nerot's Hotel—Ungenerous Reflections on Lady Nelson—Lady Nelson's Regard for Lady Hamilton—Lady Hamilton's Reputation in England—Scene at the Theatre—Social Opinion and Tattle—Sympathy with Lady Nelson—Contention at Nerot's Hotel—Miss Knight is urged to withdraw from Lady Hamilton.

1800 A.D.

In performance of the promise mentioned at the close of the last chapter, Nelson sailed from Palermo for Leghorn on the 9th of June in the *Foudroyant*, having on board the Queen, her three daughters, her son the Prince Leopold, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, the Prince Castelcicala, Miss Knight, and a numerous suite. Suffering so much in health at this time, that he wrote of his being in bed four days out of seven, Nelson landed with his friends and their

attendants at Leghorn on the 16th, after passing more than six hours outside the harbour in a stormy sea. On coming to shore the Queen of Naples and her family, after visiting the cathedral, went to the palace, where they were provided with apartments, which they occupied during the next four weeks.

That Maria Caroline expected Nelson and the Hamiltons to leave her soon after her arrival at Leghorn appears from the gifts, designed for farewell *souvenirs*, which she gave them on, or within a few days of, the 16th of June,—a jewelled portrait of King Ferdinand to Nelson; a gold snuff-box, set with jewels and ornamented with pictures of the donor and her husband to Sir William Hamilton; and a diamond necklace to Lady Hamilton. But, whilst Maria Caroline's movements were uncertain, Nelson and the Hamiltons though set on re-visiting England had not definitely arranged their plans for the journey. To this state of indecision a period was eventually put by circumstances, that determined the Queen to carry out her project of going to Vienna, and decided Nelson and the Hamiltons to accompany her thither.

Their stay at Leghorn closed with a curious popular commotion, that is described in Harrison's 'Life of Nelson.' Fretting and fuming at the approach of the French, now no more than four-and-twenty miles distant, the Livornese seized their arms and surrounded the palace, with a wild notion of securing the persons of the royal travellers, and compelling Nelson to lead them against the approaching enemy. To assuage the tumult, Lady Hamilton addressed the

multitude from a balcony of the palace in a speech that, delivered in the orator's most theatrical style and best Italian, effected its purpose. Reproving the rioters for the display of violence, that was an insult to an amiable Queen and a frivolous impertinence to the British Admiral, the speaker declared that the great Nelson would not condescend to confer with such turbulent petitioners, until they should prove the honesty of their feelings by restoring their arms to the public arsenal. To people with weapons in their hands and threats on their lips, the Admiral would not speak a word in the way of friendliness. The address having the desired effect on the crowd, Maria Caroline and her party availed themselves of the opportunity to withdraw from the palace and retire to the British war-ship *Alexander*, to which Nelson had moved from the *Foudroyant*, when the latter ship was ordered to Minorca to re-fit.

Passing the night on the *Alexander*, Maria Caroline re-landed on the following day (the 17th of July), when she lost no time in setting out for Florence and Ancona—Nelson (who had struck his flag on the 11th) and the Hamiltons, with Mrs. Cadogan and Miss Knight, being in her suite. From Leghorn to Vienna the journey, which thus began in what might be almost called a flight, was a triumphal progress. Wildly applauded by the populace of every town and hamlet through which they passed, the travellers were *fêted* sumptuously at every place where they rested. Taking to the sea at Ancona, they landed at Trieste on the 2nd of August, 1800. At Vienna, where Maria Caroline's dearest Emma was presented

by Lady Minto, the British Ambassador's wife, to their Imperial Majesties, Nelson and his friends were received by the Court and populace with extravagant enthusiasm, and carried into a whirl of gaieties and pompous festivities, that were no less exhilarating to the hero and Lady Hamilton than exhausting and hurtful to Sir William Hamilton's health. During the four days of their splendid entertainment at Eisenstadt by the Prince and Princess Esterhazy, the triumphal tourists feasted daily at a table where a hundred grenadiers, the shortest of whom was six feet high, acted as servitors. The concerts and balls equalled the dinners in cost and effectiveness. One of the four concerts was directed by Haydn, and at another of them the Prince's famous Maestro di Capella is said to have produced his oratorio of 'The Creation.' The hospitalities of Eisenstadt were scarcely more elaborate and magnificent than the festivities to which the Archduke Albert invited the Victor of Aboukir. Count Batthyany's contribution to the series of Nelson celebrations was the aquatic *fête* on the Danube, with its experiments of vessels especially constructed to resist the torrents of the mighty river. Whilst princes and nobles thus vied with one another in glorifying the trio of travellers, the Jew banker, Arnstein, surpassed the men of ancestral dignity by the splendour and prodigality of his tribute of homage to the glorious Admiral.

On the questionable authority of Lady Hamilton it has been recorded in various ways how, at the close of her stay at Vienna (which came to an end on the 27th of September, 1800) she declined the annuity of

a thousand pounds for life, which Maria pressed upon her as a modest acknowledgment of her eminent exertions for the cause of order and wholesome government in Europe. Dr. Pettigrew asks his readers to believe that Maria Caroline put into Lady Hamilton's 'hands a paper, saying it was a conveyance of £1,000 per annum that she had fixed to invest for her in the hands of Friez, of the Government Bank at Vienna, lest by any possibility she should not be suitably compensated for the services she had rendered, the money she had generously expended, and the losses she had so voluntarily sustained for the British nation' and Italy. Readers are further requested by Pettigrew (*vide* 'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii, p. 621) to believe, that Lady Hamilton 'declined the gift, and destroyed the instrument conferring it, saying, England was ever just, and to her faithful servants generous, and that she should feel it unbecoming to her own beloved and magnanimous sovereign to accept of meed or reward from any other hand.'

Whilst the biographer's diction touching this matter bears a suspicious resemblance to the language in which poor Lady Hamilton used, in her later time, to talk for a pension, the conduct attributed to the magnanimous lady is curiously unlike what she might be presumed to have done under the stated circumstances. As she had received without any show of reluctance gift after gift from the Queen—diamond necklaces, gold chains, carriage-loads of dresses, gifts to the value of five or six thousand pounds—it is rather strange that she scrupled to take the annuity. After taking so much in things easily convertible into

money, without feeling she compromised her own sovereign's dignity and her own country's reputation by taking so much from a foreign Queen, how came she all of a sudden to discover that, as a British Minister's wife, she could not take the annuity from Her Majesty of Naples. As she knew that, instead of losing much through the recent troubles in Italy, Lady Hamilton was one of the very few persons to whom those troubles had been greatly profitable, Maria Caroline was not likely to offer her the annuity by way of just and suitable compensation for losses and moneys generously paid out of pocket. There was no reason for the Queen to make the gift, after already rewarding her friend's 'services' so liberally. Readers may rest assured that it never entered the Queen's head to offer the annuity; that, if the annuity had been offered, Lady Hamilton would have accepted it with alacrity; and that the paper of conveyance, about which Dr. Pettigrew writes so curiously, has no place amongst historic evidences, for the simple reason that it never existed.

Leaving Vienna on the 27th of September, 1800, the travellers came on the following day to Prague, where they were received with attentions that accorded with the civilities lavished upon them at Vienna. From Prague they went to Lowositz, whence they journeyed by the Elbe to Dresden, where they arrived on the 2nd of October and took up their quarters at the Hôtel de Pologne till the 10th, when, on receiving false intelligence that a frigate was awaiting them at Hamburg, they resumed the passage by water to that port, to which they came on the 21st of the month.

Though she was cordially welcomed to Dresden by Mr. Elliot (the British minister) and his wife, whose influence was successfully exercised for her advantage with the several persons of eminence, Lady Hamilton endured a slight at that capital for which she was in no degree prepared after the courtesies that had been lavished upon her by their Imperial Majesties at Vienna. To an intimation of Lady Hamilton's desire to be admitted to her presence, the Electress replied with a significant expression of regret that the arrangements of her court denied her the pleasure of seeing the lady of whom she had heard so much. 'Sir,' Nelson is reported to have said to Mr. Elliot, on hearing of the Electress's disinclination to receive Sir William Hamilton's wife, 'if there is any difficulty of that sort, Lady Hamilton will knock the Elector down,'—a menace (recorded by Mrs. Trench*) that was not likely to operate beneficially for the English lady, on being reported to the Electress, who, whilst thus jealous for her own and her court's honour, availed herself of a pretext, that rendered the refusal as little offensive as possible to Nelson's friends. It was probably in conversation arising out of this humiliating rebuff, that Lady Hamilton with characteristic frankness spoke to Mrs. Trench of her fear that the Queen of England might persist in her resolve to exclude her from St. James's. After conferring with Mrs. Trench [Mrs. St. George] on this delicate question, Lady Hamilton, touching on

* In 1800 this lady was styled Mrs. St. George, the name she acquired by her first marriage, though she is usually spoken of in this book as Mrs. Trench,—the name by which she is best known to readers.

another delicate matter, remarked, 'I care little about it. I had much rather she would settle half Sir William's pension on me.' That Lady Hamilton was capable of gossiping in this fashion on two such delicate matters to so recent and casual an acquaintance, shows how greatly she was misunderstood by those who have regarded her as belonging to a common kind of artful and designing women.

On hearing from Mr. Elliot that an English frigate was awaiting them at Hamburg, Nelson and his party lost no time in re-embarking and starting for that port. From the Minister who attended them to the river and saw them off, Mrs. Trench received the particulars of her comical account of the departure of the celebrated voyagers. 'The moment they were on board,' says Mrs. Trench, whose prevailing notion of the glorious admiral, the famous beauty, and her scholarly husband was that they were inexpressibly grotesque and ludicrous persons, 'there was an end of the fine arts, of the attitudes, of the acting, the dancing, and the singing. Lady Hamilton's maid began to scold in French about some provisions which had been forgot, in language quite impossible to repeat, using certain French words which were never spoken but by men of the lowest class, and roaring them out from one boat to another. Lady Hamilton began bawling for an Irish stew, and her old mother set about washing the potatoes, which she did as cleverly as possible. They were exactly like Hogarth's actresses dressing in a barn.' It can be conceived what droll things Mr. Elliot, a perfect type of official decorum and conventional good-breeding, told of his last hour with

these queer people,—of Miss Knight, who was nothing better than Lady Hamilton's obsequious *compagnon de voyage;* of Dame Cadogan, who was just what Lady Hamilton's mother might be expected to be; of the over-fed Beauty who dressed so ill, talked so loudly, and drank sparkling wine so freely; of the old diplomatist, who had in his dotage linked himself to so strange a specimen of a waddling enchantress; and of the one-armed sailor, who had spoken proudly of Lady Hamilton's ability to strike the Elector to the ground. One can imagine the plaintive and deprecatory tone, in which the equally fastidious and humorous Mr. Elliot remarked after each of the piquant anecdotes, 'Now don't let us laugh to-night; let us all speak in turn, and be very, very quiet.' It is thus that people of the best society and conventional good-breeding make fun of their casual acquaintances who are *not* in society, and whose manners want the self-control and other virtuous peculiarities of conventional good style.

Finding no frigate at Hamburg ready to waft them to the Thames, Nelson and his companions remained there some ten days, fêted and caressed by merchants and bankers, who deemed themselves greatly fortunate in having the illustrious visitors so long upon their hands. Whilst the municipal authorities and the several subordinate corporations of the mercantile city vied with one another in hospitable profuseness, individuals hit on eccentric ways of showing their enthusiasm for the strangers. One of the great wine-merchants of the port approached Lady Hamilton with a petition, that she would induce the glori-

ous Nelson to glorify him by accepting at his hands six dozen bottles of a marvellous Rhine wine, as old as the year in which James the First of England had died. Nelson consented to accept six bottles of the ancient vintage, on condition that the donor dined with him on the morrow, and helped him to drink them. Another petitioner, the pastor of a village some forty miles away, was dismissed after obtaining his request, —the autograph signature that Nelson was entreated to put on the fly-leaf of the Bible, which the pious applicant had for that purpose brought with him from his parish.

The hoped-for frigate still failing to appear, the Admiral and his party eventually left Hamburg by the *King George* mail-packet, that, putting to sea on the 31st of October, brought the voyagers over stormy waters into Great Yarmouth harbour on the 6th of November. There is no need to tell again how Great Yarmouth rejoiced at the visit thus paid them by the most celebrated of living Norfolk men; how the Admiral's carriage was drawn by vociferous fishermen from the harbour to the 'Wrestlers' Inn;' how the ships in the harbour showed their joy at his arrival by sending aloft their festal flags; how the Mayor and Corporation hastened to their glorious guest and made him free of the town; how the troops, regulars and volunteers, turned out in their pig-tails and pipe-clay, and paraded before 'The Wrestlers' with a fitting power of fifers and drummers; how the hero went to church, to thank God Almighty for bringing him safe back to 'Old England'; how on leaving church he visited sick seamen in the hospital;

how at night the whole town went into illumination, whilst the two adjacent counties, near and far, blazed out into bonfires; how on the morrow the hero of the seas began under an escort of volunteer-cavalry the journey to London *viâ* Ipswich, that was one long triumphal progress from the port at which he landed almost to the very threshold of Nerot's Hotel, King's Street, St. James's, where his old father and his wife gave him greeting.

Holding together till the 9th of November, on which day they came to London, the fellow-travellers from Italy dispersed soon after reaching the capital, —Sir William and Lady Hamilton finding a temporary home in Grosvenor Square, where Mr. Beckford's house had been put at their service, whilst Nelson lived with his wife and father—first at Nerot's Hotel, and afterwards at a lodging in Arlington Street. After passing two or three nights at an hotel in Albemarle Street, where she had Mrs. Cadogan for a companion, Miss Cornelia Knight became the guest of Mrs. Nepean.

It has been repeatedly used as a ground of complaint against Lady Nelson that, instead of being ready at Yarmouth to embrace her husband at the moment of his landing, 'she coolly waited at an hotel in London, and then gave him' (to use Dr. Pettigrew's words) 'a reception which has been described as cold and chilling.' There is, however, no evidence before the world, that the wife had been duly forewarned of her husband's course for the Norfolk sea-port. Though she had for some months been looking for his re-appearance in England, it is

conceivable that, even to the last moment, she did not know at what port he would land, and very much more than probable that she travelled to London with her aged and infirm father-in-law, in order to see her husband as soon as possible.

So late as the middle of June, and possibly to a later time, she had good reason for thinking that her husband would return from Italy by sea, in some ship of the Mediterranean Fleet, if not in the *Foudroyant*. Even to July, Nelson in the uncertainty of his arrangements seems to have held to his design of making the whole of his homeward journey by water. That he accompanied Maria Caroline to Vienna was possibly due to a resolve, formed towards the close of Her Majesty's sojourn at Leghorn. Throughout the devious tour he was far too unsettled as to the details of the journey, to be able to give Lady Nelson precise information as to the place or time of his landing in England. At Dresden he was so prepared to hear a frigate had been sent out, to take him and his friends over the sea, that he went on to Hamburg without a misgiving as to the arrival of the frigate. At Hamburg he waited for days for the expected vessel, which, had it appeared according to his expectation, would probably have taken him to the Thames or some other port than Yarmouth, in accordance with instructions from the Admiralty. It was not till he had been disappointed of the frigate, that he went on board the mail-packet which conveyed him to Great Yarmouth. It is therefore conceivable that his landing at the Norfolk port was an incident, for which in time prior to the electric telegraph Lady

Nelson was prepared by no advertisement, that would have enabled her to meet him there, even if she had wished to receive him to her embrace in the presence of Lady Hamilton.

Anyhow, what is there in the facts of the case to justify the imputation of unwifely coldness, preferred against her by Dr. Pettigrew and successive writers? At a time when she was uninformed as to the details of her husband's movements, and knew only that in a month's or two months' time he would be again in England, she travelled up to London under the reasonable impression, that by doing so she would put herself in the surest way for speedy re-union with her husband. In this respect, she acted like her father-in-law, the old Norfolk rector, who was strongly attached to his famous and favourite son. It has never been suggested that the feeble and invalid clergyman showed a lack of paternal affection in moving from Norfolk to London, and settling in a London hotel, so as to be there in anticipation of his son's coming (by unannounced route) to the capital. On the contrary, readers have been encouraged, or at least left at liberty, to regard the old man's action in thus coming to town, as indicative of parental solicitude and tenderness.

On other matters, Lady Nelson has been treated ungenerously by her husband's biographers. It has been urged to her discredit, that her letters were 'too trivial and insignificant to command her husband's attention,' though he answered them in a way which proves him to have delighted in them. As though it were a fault for which she was accountable, some

of the personal historians maké illiberal reflections on the comparative humility of her first husband's position. Overlooking the fact that by birth and training she belonged to the aristocracy of the Leeward Islands, the disparaging annalists hint that in marrying Dr. Nisbet's widow Captain Nelson of the *Boreas* condescended to a match, that might almost be called a *mésalliance.* According to one of these disdainful writers, she was in no degree 'worthy of being a hero's wife,' though a woman so 'highly virtuous and very respectable and exceedingly ill-tempered' was well enough for the sphere from which she was unfortunately taken, and 'would have been exemplary as the spouse of a village apothecary.' In the same spirit much has been written of the lady's 'Creole blood,' as though Creoles were somehow congenitally predisposed to wickedness, and Creole blood were necessarily less pure and generous than the blood of Europeans *not* born in the West Indies. It has also been charged against the gentlewoman (who gave her first husband a son), as though it were an offence for which she should be held solely accountable, that she failed to make her hero a father.

The time has come for cancelling these spiteful reflections on a woman, whose misfortunes are not her sole claims to sympathy, and for erasing them from the scroll of English biography. Let there be an end to malicious chatter about the creole blood of a lady who came of a gentle English stock, and was none the less a gentlewoman by birth for having been born in the West Indies. Till it shall be proved that the pure-blooded English natives of our West Indian

dependencies are naturally less amiable than English people born in England, no more should be said of Lady Nelson's creole ill-temper. In the total absence of evidence that she was wanting in amiability, no more should be said of the exceeding badness of her nature. No longer should it be accounted to her for unrighteousness that, before making Nelson's acquaintance, she had been so unfortunate as to lose a husband, who was a member of the medical profession. If she was a widow when Nelson fell in love with her, it remains that she was a young, lovely, well-mannered, and well-descended widow. No more than twenty-two years of age when he begged her to become his wife, she belonged to a family that was in no respect inferior to Nelson's people. Even by her detractors it is admitted that her conduct did not misbeseem either her own or her second husband's ancestral worth. In truth, she was so exasperatingly 'virtuous' and 'respectable' that, on looking about for a stick to throw at her, they could not venture to say anything worse of her than that, under the trials arising from her husband's regard for Lady Hamilton, she showed more sensitiveness than the circumstances warranted, and failed in the magnanimity and sentimental indifference to be looked for in 'a hero's wife.' Apart from this alleged failure, there is literally no evidence that the 'highly virtuous and very respectable' Lady Nelson was an 'exceedingly ill-tempered woman.' That she was not the exceedingly ill-tempered woman we are required to think her, appears from the affectionate terms on which Nelson (at times a quick-tempered and irascible, though essentially

generous man) lived with her for more than five years at a time,—from the cordial affectionateness with which he spoke of and wrote to her, almost up to the moment of his return to England in 1800,—and from the pleasant relations that existed between her and her husband's father. In truth, nothing would ever have been written or whispered to the discredit of her domestic lovableness, had not the biographical busybodies conceived, that disparagement of her would work to Nelson's advantage.

Towards the close of her long sojourn in Italy, and during her journey to England, it was Miss Knight's impression that Nelson was anticipating pleasure from re-union with his wife. At Leghorn he remarked in her hearing, that he hoped during his stay in London he and Lady Nelson would see a great deal of the Hamiltons. They should, he hoped, often dine together, before the Hamiltons went off to their musical parties, just about the time when he and Lady Nelson would be going to bed. One of his last acts at Hamburg was to buy some magnificent lace for a court dress for his wife, and a black lace cloak for a lady who during his absence from England had been very attentive to his dear Fanny. The husband who thus talked of his wife, and took thought for her personal equipment, cannot be supposed to have resolved on separating from her in a short time. It is, however, certain that he returned to England without a purpose of passing any considerable time in her society. For he had scarcely touched shore at Yarmouth, when he wrote to the Admiralty, announcing the restoration of his health,

and asking for immediate employment. It would distress him if the Lords of the Admiralty regarded his recent land-journey as an indication of distaste for the sea. But it is conceivable that, in making this petition for active service, he was chiefly actuated by a prudential feeling that under the circumstances, which were seldom absent from his mind, he had better be at a distance from Lady Hamilton.

It is easier to imagine that Nelson's first interview with his wife at Nerot's Hotel was fruitful of embarrassment to both of them, than to conceive that he discovered unwifely coldness in her absence from Yarmouth at the moment of his landing. Had it been physically possible for Lady Nelson to get to Yarmouth in time to see him come ashore, Nelson would have known she was bound to remain by the side of his invalid father, instead of hastening to the coast to greet him eight-and-forty hours sooner. One may be confident that no words spoken by the Admiral in 1800 occasioned Dr. Pettigrew's utterance of regret that she 'was not at Yarmouth to receive her husband.' Nor is it probable that Nelson, knowing how much more cause his wife had to receive him with an air of nervous distress than to fly to him with loving alacrity, made any complaint at the time of her 'cold and chilling' response to his salute.

In truth, the husband and wife came together in Nerot's Hotel under afflicting conditions, that would have rendered a show of mutual and unqualified gladness a piece of mutual hypocrisy. At least two years had passed since rumours first came to Lady Nelson's ears, that her husband had so far and so

openly yielded to the fascinations of Lady Hamilton, as to provoke an indignant protest from his stepson. It is believed that Josiah Nisbet wrote to his mother on the painful affair in the autumn of 1798. Even if the young captain exercised more discretion, delicacy, and forbearance than are generally understood to have influenced him in his correspondence with his mother; even if he wrote no line on the distressing business to her, rumour had speedily carried to her ears strange and harrowing accounts of her husband's idolatry of the dangerous woman of beauty and pleasure. For two years the earliest rumours had been followed by a stream of confirmatory rumours.

Throughout the same two years, Lady Nelson's reasonable jealousy had been quick to catch agonizing tales of the doings and talents and tastes of the exemplary adventuress, whose fame had for more than twenty years lived in drawing-rooms to which she was personally unknown, and would never be personally admitted. It was in the nature of things for Lady Hamilton's reputation to be even more scandalous than her life. Whilst strangely shameful things were told of her in print, worse and more repulsive things were reported of her in the coteries. How much of this gossip had come to the ears of the Admiral's wife it is impossible to say; but, if she had gathered only a little of it, she had good cause to think of her lord as the admirer of a superlatively wicked woman. In January, 1800, the gallant and fine-hearted Troubridge wrote repeatedly to Lady Hamilton, in the hope of rendering her more circumspect in her conduct, and less fruitful of scandalous

tales that, after flitting from ship to ship throughout the Mediterranean fleet, found their way to England.

Be assured (Troubridge wrote to her on the 14th of January, 1800, *vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, p. 339) I have not written to you from any impertinent interference, but from a wish to warn you of the ideas that were going about, which you could not hear of, as no person can be indifferent to the construction put on things which may appear to your Ladyship innocent, and I make no doubt, done with the best intention—still your enemies will and do give things a different colouring. I will not trust to paper the business of the Singer, the ill-natured turn it may get induced me to put your Ladyship on your guard. I think it is gone to Pisa, and from thence to London. You may not know you have many enemies, I therefore risk your displeasure by telling you.

Who the Singer was, what the particular indiscretion may have been, are matters of no moment at this date. The purpose for reproducing the passage is to show, how busy scandal and her enemies were with the reputation of the woman, of whom Lady Nelson had, during the past two years, heard far more than enough for her own peace of mind,—and much that was calculated to weaken and shake her confidence in her husband's discretion and in his loyalty towards her.

During the last seven months, Lady Nelson's dissatisfaction with her husband's friendship for the Hamiltons, and her natural jealousy of Lady Hamilton, had necessarily increased. From the spring of the year she had been impatient for the return of her husband, whose health required repose and temporary release from the anxieties of active service. But, instead of hastening to England for rest and recrea-

tion, he had lingered in the Mediterranean, when urgent duty no longer ordered him to remain there. She had heard of the trip from Palermo to Malta, and was aware he made it in the company of Lady Hamilton. On leaving Italy, he spent months on the tour to Vienna, Dresden, and Hamburg in the company of the Hamiltons, instead of returning by sea to his wife, who was pining to see him. Lady Hamilton was by his side when he landed at Yarmouth. And now Lady Hamilton had travelled with him from Yarmouth to London. Under these circumstances, should it appear that she could have posted from Nerot's Hotel to Yarmouth in time to embrace him on the Norfolk coast, and that she was under no obligation to stay with her invalid father in town, few readers would blame her for determining to remain where she was. She may well have thought it better, both for herself and her husband, that she should see him before meeting Lady Hamilton and determining what course she ought to take towards her.

Having regard to the thoughts that had been fretting and distressing her for months, and must have been in her mind when he at length came to her presence, who can condemn Lady Nelson for revealing something of the trouble that possessed her? One might say, that it would have been to her discredit, had she kept her genuine feelings to herself, and answered his greeting without any show of embarrassment and constraint. As they resulted naturally from conditions, for which she was in no degree accountable, it would be most unjust to

censure Lady Nelson for the peculiarities of the reception she accorded her husband—the reception 'which' (according to Dr. Pettigrew) 'has been described as "cold and chilling."'

Whilst Lady Nelson was necessarily ill at ease, Nelson cannot be supposed to have approached her with an untroubled conscience and unqualified delight. For weeks Lady Hamilton had been regarded by him as in a state of health, that promised to result in the birth of a child of which he would be the father, and of this prospect he could not say a word to his wife. To have such a secret from his wife must have been painful and humiliating to a man of his natural candour and truthfulness, when he was on the point of introducing Lady Hamilton to her as a woman, worthy of her confidence and friendship. The interview cannot have been the less embarrassing, because he had arranged with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, that they should dine on the same day at Nerot's Hotel with his father and Lady Nelson. Indeed, it might be inferred, from Miss Knight's words, that, on going for the first time to the hotel where his wife was staying, Nelson was accompanied by the Hamiltons. 'When we arrived in town,' says the woman of letters in her 'Autobiography,' 'Sir William and Lady Hamilton *went with* Lord Nelson to dine with Lady Nelson.' It may, however, be assumed that, before the Hamiltons went with him to the hotel, Nelson had seen and spoken with his wife. Anyhow, whether it took place under the observation of the Hamiltons, or was a strictly private *tête-à-tête* interview, the first meeting of the Admiral and Lady

Nelson must necessarily have lacked the perfect cordiality that would have distinguished it, had nothing occurred to shake their mutual confidence. If Nelson suffered from her lack of warmth, she no doubt suffered from his reserve and uneasiness.

As Dr. Pettigrew was the first of Nelson's biographers to produce the conclusive evidence of the state of health, in which Lady Hamilton returned to London, he should have foreborne to speak lightly 'of those suspicions which took possession of Lady Nelson's mind,' as though they were groundless or extravagant. Nor can we concur with Dr. Pettigrew in thinking that, in consideration of his having 'raised her to the rank of a peeress,' Lady Nelson should have hastened to meet her husband at a place, where she would encounter the woman whom she had reason to regard as his mistress. Her second marriage had no doubt afforded her social advantages, that would have in some degree consoled her for the loss of his affection, had she prized wealth and rank more than his devotion. Removing her from narrow means to comparative affluence, he had raised her from obscurity to eminence. She had received from his hands gifts, that would have strengthened his title to her admiration and gratitude, had he persisted in his former attachment to her. But rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. Growing worse than worthless through the donor's change of feeling, they may by exasperating the sense of his unkindness even operate like positive injuries. It would have been fortunate for Lady Nelson, had she been so constituted as to be capable of finding in his

benefactions a sufficient balm for her wounded feelings. But, whilst it cannot be fairly imputed to her for a fault, that she was less thoughtful of her acquired rank than sensitive for her natural dignity, it is to her honour that she rated the peerage he had given her, as a paltry toy in comparison with the love he seemed to be withdrawing from her.

In justice to Nelson it should, however, be believed that he had no purpose of offering her indignity. If the result of 'the lamentable incident' forbade him to think of withdrawing from his friendship with Lady Hamilton, he was determined that henceforth the attachment should be as sinless, as it had been before one brief passage of tempestuous emotion. By virtue of this resolve, still able to think of it as a platonic attachment, notwithstanding the short triumph of passion, he would thus describe his friendship for Lady Hamilton to his father,—a representation so truthful a man could not have made, had his regard for her been for the moment other than what he declared it to be. While nursing this resolve, he deemed he could honestly invite his wife to participate in his feeling for his friend's wife, and was confident that both he and Lady Hamilton could and would so regulate their mutual affection, that it would afford Lady Nelson no occasion for resentment nor cause for uneasiness.

This confidence would of course have been impossible to him, had he known all the reasons Lady Nelson had for thinking ill of Lady Hamilton, or conceived how mere feminine instinct would enable the woman who was his wife to detect the guilty secret of his

intercourse with the woman, who had at least for one short hour been his mistress. That he conceived it possible for his wife to live in close and daily intercourse with himself and Lady Hamilton without discovering the momentous secret, points to the simplicity that was one of Nelson's characteristics, and also to his ignorance of the gentler sex.

Even if she had made her acquaintance without prejudice against her, Lady Nelson would have discovered instinctively in the ever-natural and demonstrative Lady Hamilton an enemy to her honour and domestic peace,—a woman for her to fear, abhor, and avoid. For it was not in Lady Hamilton's power to pass an evening in the society of her hero and his wife, without revealing her idolatry of him by word or look. The efforts she made to ingratiate herself with Nelson's wife only quickened Lady Nelson's dislike of the syren. Instead of being soothed and propitiated by the colloquial complaisances, that commended the Beauty to the less discerning of her new acquaintances, Lady Nelson distrusted flatteries and blandishments that were intended to conciliate her. The naturalness, that charmed Lady Hamilton's admirers, nettled and exasperated the suspicious gentlewoman, who rated it as the mere effrontery of a wicked adventuress. If the fretted and angry wife forbore to speak disparagingly of the lovely Emma, as soon as she had driven away from Nerot's Hotel, the forbearance must have cost Lady Nelson a painful effort. Possibly on the first night of their re-union after so long a separation, poor Fanny was so far dishonest to her husband as to conceal her aversion for

'those Hamiltons,' under a few commonplace expressions of insincere approval. There are moments when a woman must be less than sincerely truthful or less than altogether wifely.

The dinner at Nerot's Hotel was followed by the dinner in Grosvenor Square, given by Sir William and Lady Hamilton to Lord and Lady Nelson, Miss Knight, and other friends, the Duke of Sussex and Lady Augusta Murray being amongst the guests, who came to the entertainment in the evening. It having been arranged that the Hamiltons and Nelsons should go together to the theatre on the following evening, Miss Knight was pressed to join the party, but she declined the invitation and consequently escaped the pain of being present at a scene that soon became the talk of the town. Overcome by emotions she may be supposed to have done her utmost to conceal, Lady Nelson fainted in the box, where she was sitting with her husband and Lady Hamilton. Matters having gone thus far towards public scandal, Miss Knight's friends urged her to lose no time in withdrawing from her association with Lady Hamilton, although the abrupt withdrawal might expose her to a charge of ingratitude to acquaintances, who had shown her extraordinary kindness. Whilst poor Miss Knight was debating how to extricate herself from a perilous entanglement, busy-bodies seized their opportunities for telling Sir William Hamilton what the world said of his wife's relation to his illustrious friend, and for enlightening Nelson with respect to Lady Hamilton's reputation and antecedents. The tattle, which caused Miss Knight to take the first

steps for gracefully retiring from 'a connection,' that after serving her in good stead for more than two years now menaced with social discredit, naturally disposed Nelson to be seriously annoyed with his wife, whilst it no less naturally confirmed him in his chivalrous concern for the woman who had befriended him in the Mediterranean, and in two or three months would be the mother of his child. 'He felt irritated,' says Miss Knight, 'and took it up in an unfortunate manner by devoting himself more and more to her' [*i.e.*, Lady Hamilton], 'for the purpose of what he called supporting her.'

CHAPTER IX.

SEPARATED BY MUTUAL DISAGREEMENT.

Bickering and Strife—Social Distractions—Nelson's Visit to 'the City'—Sir William Hamilton's financial Position—His Demands for Compensation—Nelson's View of the Claims—Friends in Council—'Vathek' Beckford's Project for making Himself a Peer—Lady Hamilton's Hope of becoming a Peeress—Her Application to Henry Dundas—Christmas Festivities at Fonthill—The Hamiltons and Nelson in Wiltshire—The Millionaire's Terms—Renewal of Efforts for the Peerage—Lady Nelson in Arlington Street—The Scene at her Breakfast-Table—Her quick Anger and firm Resolve—Mr. Haslewood on Wifely Duty—Lady Nelson leaves her Husband—Review of the Case—Faults on both Sides—Excuses for Nelson—His last Letters to his Wife—Parted for ever.

1800—1801 A.D.

WHILST Nelson was living uneasily with his wife from the 9th of November to the 19th of December, 1800, they were fortunately preserved by his numerous social distractions from bickering incessantly about the causes of their growing estrangement. From the hour of his arrival in London to the moment of his departure for Wiltshire, he was necessarily much in society. Coming to town on Sunday the 9th, he appears to have called on Earl Spencer before meeting the Hamiltons at his wife's dinner-table. On Monday, the 10th of November, he was at the Guildhall banquet, where he received the sword

given him by the City. The acclamations of the populace, who on that occasion took the horses from his carriage and drew it triumphantly from Ludgate Hill to the festal scene, and the extraordinary enthusiasm with which he was welcomed by the civic authorities and the Lord Mayor's guests, must necessarily have driven for many hours from his mind all bitter thoughts of his wife's manifest disinclination to see much of Lady Hamilton. The dinner at Grosvenor Square, to which reference has been made, may be assigned to Tuesday the 11th. The public and ceremonious visit to the theatre was an affair of the next evening. As the days went on, the invitations that could not be declined without discourtesy became more numerous. On the 20th Lord Nelson took his seat in the House of Lords. Desirous of getting to sea again as soon as possible, he was under the necessity of paying frequent visits to the Admiralty. Personal affairs, which he had neglected during his long absence from England, claimed his attention and in various ways occupied much of his time. Busy with his own private matters, he was constrained to concern himself in the pecuniary interests of the Hamiltons, and in Vathek Beckford's astounding project for sneaking into the House of Lords, under cover of a Patent that should in the first instance operate for Sir William Hamilton's elevation to the Peerage. With so many matters to engage his attention, and divert his mind from his supreme domestic difficulty, the hero fortunately escaped the incessant bickering and embroilment, that would have attended his discord with Lady Nelson, had it

been for the moment his sole source of excitement.

Having lived so far beyond his income at Palermo, that he was glad to accept pecuniary assistance from Nelson, Sir William Hamilton returned to England in what may be called circumstances of difficulty, though it would be an exaggeration to speak of the owner of the unencumbered Welsh estate as an impoverished or seriously embarrassed man. In what remained to him of his art-treasures after the disastrous wreck of the *Colossus*, he still possessed the means of liberating himself from debt without mortgaging his land. Still he needed for his immediate arrangements a few thousand pounds of ready money, —perhaps half as many thousands as he could get for his pictures and vases. This being so, it is not surprising that Sir William resolved to lose no time in applying to the Treasury for the pension usually accorded to superannuated diplomatists of his standing and services. Nor, as he loved money, is it surprising that Sir William determined, whilst suing for the pension, to press the Treasury for a grant of a goodly number of thousands, in compensation of the losses he had sustained through the Neapolitan revolution. From documents, published in Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' it appears that in November, 1800, Sir William was making out his claim upon the Treasury, and in doing so was assisted by Nelson, who of course knew little or nothing of the particulars on which the claim was based, apart from what he was told by the claimant. A paper in Nelson's handwriting certifies that, from the particulars thus submitted to consideration, he was of opinion Sir William might

fairly ask the Treasury to compensate him for his heavy and unforseen charges in settling and maintaining a new establishment at Palermo, and also for losses (computed at £10,000) of artistic works, furniture and domestic effects, which, in his zeal for the preservation of the royal family, he neglected to send to England, when he could have done so had he been chiefly thoughtful of his own interests. 'The settling this new establishment,' Nelson wrote in this paper, 'together with the closing the accounts on his being superseded, cost, by bills drawn up in London, £13,213, between August, 1799, and June, 1800, besides all losses which cannot be estimated less than £10,000 sterling.' Without bills, vouchers, and numerous other particulars of intelligence that are not attainable for the purpose of this work, it is impossible to form any opinion of the reasonableness of the demand for compensation, in respect to the alleged expenditure of £13,213. The second and smaller of the two sums is, however, especially deserving the reader's attention. As the £10,000 comprised the estimated value of the *objets d'art* shipped in the *Colossus* in October, 1798, and lost through the wreck of that vessel, the computation does not appear to have greatly exceeded the value, which their sanguine owner might have assigned to his multifarious chattels before losing them. But how does the computation agree with what Lady Hamilton lived to imagine to have been the value of the goods she and her husband lost, at the time of the Parthenopeian revolution, through their devotion to the honour of Great Britain and the interests of

their Sicilian Majesties? In later time Lady Hamilton valued the goods so unselfishly surrendered at £39,000. Talking about them to Nelson in November, 1800, Sir William valued the same goods *and* the things of art lost in the *Colossus* at no more than £10,000. The difference of the two valuations indicates how wildly Lady Hamilton talked in her later years about her sacrifices, for the honour of her ungrateful country.

Nelson was not the only person whom the Hamiltons consulted about their claims on the Treasury for compensation. Whilst Nelson was invited to consider the particulars of those claims, an appeal was made to Vathek Beckford for his sympathetic consideration of the little bill, that was about to be sent in to the Treasury by his impoverished relatives. As a man of sentiment, Mr. Beckford was of course deeply grieved to learn, that his dear Sir William and Lady Hamilton were less prosperous than they wished and ought to be. As a good man of business (for the connoisseur and voluptuary knew much more about business than he allowed the world to suspect), Mr. Beckford saw at a glance, that his dear cousin and his dear cousin's lovely wife would whistle in vain to the Treasury for £20,000. At the same time, as a shrewd man ever with an eye to his own interest, the Fonthill millionaire conceived he might use Sir William and Lady Hamilton, for the attainment of what had been from early manhood his highest ambition.

Eighteen years had now passed, since Mr. Beckford had fallen under the hideous suspicion to which

reference was made in a previous chapter. During these eighteen years, the dark cloud had lost something of its original blackness. By this time the abominable scandal had become an old, vaguely-remembered, time-worn, time-discredited story. All the persons to whom the circumstances of the scandal were best known, and all the personages of high society who were the culprit's most severe and authoritative censors, eighteen years since, had one by one passed from the scene. Even from the scandal's birthday two or three powerful persons had questioned its truth, and been disposed to regard the man of evil fame as the victim of prejudice and malice. Since the Hamiltons visited him in 1791, shortly before their marriage, Mr. Beckford of Fonthill had drawn about him a better lot of friends than the entertaining people, who in that year trooped from town to applaud Emma Hart's songs and attitudes in Wiltshire. In the London season of 1800, he had appeared in many a great house that ten years earlier was closed to him. In short, without having quite lived down his former infamy, he had so far survived it as to be capable of thinking it possible, that even yet he might become a peer.

This being so, Mr. Beckford bethought himself whether he could not make the Hamiltons subservient to his ambition. Though rich enough for his needs and station, Sir William Hamilton, after the wont of old men, wished to be something richer. The old man wished to provide handsomely for his widow, without charging his Welsh estate too heavily. After the wont of her sort of womankind,

Lady Hamilton was at the threshold of middle age growing as greedy of money, as in her better time she had been careless about it. They both wanted more money without working for it. Moreover, Mr. Beckford construed their recent appeal to him for sympathy and counsel, as a delicate hint that their millionaire cousin might aid them to enlarge their means. Could they make it worth his while to serve them? Sir William had claims on the country,—claims which the Ministry would certainly be slow to satisfy with money, but probably quick to satisfy with a gift that would cost the Exchequer nothing. After serving his King and country for thirty-six years as Minister at a foreign court, Sir William could doubtless get a peerage, if he begged hard for it and abated his claims for compensation. His prayers would be supported by the several powerful peers to whom he was nearly related, by other peers whom he had treated well in Italy, and no doubt by the brand-new peer—the nation's idol—the glorious Nelson. The result of Mr. Beckford's deliberation was that he sent his agent, Mr. Nicholas Williams, on a secret and delicate mission to Sir William Hamilton.

In the execution of this mission, Mr. Nicholas Williams called on Sir William Hamilton in Grosvenor Square, on the 14th of November, 1800, and told him that if for the satisfaction of his claims on the country he should seek and obtain from the Crown a peerage, that on his death without male issue would devolve on Mr. Beckford and his heirs, the owner of Fonthill would secure to him for the term of his life an annuity, a pro-

portion of which should be continued to Lady Hamilton for the term of her life, in case she should survive her husband. In deciding to make this astounding proposal by a verbal message, Mr. Beckford was doubtless controlled by reluctance to create enduring evidence of the overture, without first ascertaining Sir William Hamilton's readiness to join in the project. That Sir William was disposed to entertain this offer, which, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, he might be presumed to have declined with laughter as a wild and fantastic suggestion, appears from the fact that, before dismissing Mr. Williams on the 14th of November, he requested the envoy from Fonthill to put in writing an outline of the proposal. To this request for written words, that should preserve the principals in an equally important and delicate negociation from subsequent misunderstanding, Mr. Williams answered on the following day (November 15th) with a letter (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson') containing this intelligible though not altogether lucid sentence,

'And as Administration, from the great pressure of the times, and the number of claims they must have upon them, may not find it convenient to accord with your expectations, as to making a provision beyond the distinguished mark of favour you will no doubt receive from his Majesty, Mr. Beckford has authorised me to say, if a Peerage should be offered, and you could arrange it so that the grant may be made to yourself, with remainder to Mr. Beckford and his heirs, that he would, in case of Government, secure to you an annuity for life of whatever sum the consideration Government may make shall fall short of your expectations, with an adequate reversion to Lady Hamilton for her life.'

Mr. Beckford's offer having been thus put into

writing, the Hamiltons and Nelson held counsel on the feasibility of the project, and on the steps that should be taken for compassing, or at least for seeing whether it would be in their power to compass, so strange an arrangement for placing Sir William amongst the peers, exalting Lady Hamilton to a peeress, and eventually giving Vathek Beckford his desire. With his knowledge of official life and of the several strong reasons people had for regarding the Fonthill millionaire with disapproval and even with repugnance, Sir William Hamilton could not be sanguine for the success of the project. But partly because the arrangement would be so greatly beneficial to himself, and partly because he lacked the nerve to utter words of common-sense that would irritate his emotional wife, he adopted the scheme in a faint-hearted way, at her instance rather than of his own will and judgment. She, of course, was too excited by a project, so congenial to her ambition and vanity, to be capable of seeing why she should laugh it out of serious consideration as a wildly ludicrous conceit. Moreover, the incidents of her own marvellous career had disqualified her to judge the case. To an adventuress, who from a nursery-maid had risen to be Maria Caroline's intimate friend, the prospect of becoming a peeress may well have seemed nothing more than a promise of further good fortune, congruent in quality and proportion with her previous social successes. Whilst Lady Hamilton took this view of her prospect of becoming Lady Nelson's equal in the regard of heralds, Nelson, sometimes a simpleton on land,

though never less than a hero at sea, deemed it only fair and reasonable that, as he had been made a peer for the victory of Aboukir, the Patroness of the Navy who had helped him to win the glorious battle should take her place amongst peeresses, by virtue of a peerage granted to her husband, who had in the way of diplomacy done so much for British interests in the Mediterranean.

This being so, the trio concluded to close with Mr. Beckford's offer, and in their several ways to do their utmost to bring about an arrangement that would be alike agreeable to themselves and to the Wiltshire plutocrat. What they *did* for the attainment of their purpose, does not appear fully. But something is known of their exertions for the end they had in view. Forbearing for the present to press the Marquis of Douglas and his other potential kindred to use their influence with ministers, Sir William Hamilton, who two years later confessed that in 1800 he did not 'embark in the business heartily,' probably did no more than intimate to influential personages of the Treasury and Foreign Office, that he should willingly make a large abatement of his pecuniary claims on the country, provided he were assured his services would be rewarded with a proper increase of his social dignity. Nelson, more likely to defeat his friends' cause by excessive zeal than to further it by discreet advocacy, may be conceived to have told Lord Spencer that Sir William Hamilton was entitled to nothing less from the country he had served so long and effectually, than a peerage, together with compensation for the losses he had sustained through

the Neapolitan revolution. As for Lady Hamilton, *it is known* that she had an interview with Henry Dundas, in which she impressed upon the Secretary of State that her husband had claims to a peerage, which could not be disregarded by a ministry, having any wish to stand well with posterity. 'Your interview with D.,' Mr. Beckford wrote from Fonthill to Lady Hamilton on the 24th of November, 1800, 'holds forth some hope. I agree with you in thinking him the best of the tribe.' One may be sure that D. (the Right Honourable Henry Dundas) received Lady Hamilton courteously, listened to her with a reassuring show of interest, and to the last moment of their interview rendered her all the homage of lip and eye, due to a woman of her rare beauty and remarkable story. But it may be questioned whether the lady's interview with the Secretary of State improved in any degree Mr. Beckford's chance of sneaking into fellowship with the Lords. Anyhow Lady Hamilton derived hope from her interview with Mr. Dundas; and in her elation at the statesman's words, the ever too-communicative lady was talkative to her acquaintance about what she was scheming for. In conceiving what was said of the Hamiltons in high official circles, at a time when all 'society' was prattling about Nelson's domestic difficulty, readers must be mindful how cognizant those circles were of Lady Hamilton's desire to range herself with the peeresses.

To strike the bargain with their confederate in Wiltshire, and possibly also to come to a more precise understanding with him on the pecuniary details of

the compact, the Hamiltons decided to visit him at Fonthill, in accordance with an invitation he had more than once pressed them to accept. Knowing they should please their wealthy cousin by journeying to his house in the coldest season of the year, they were aware they would gratify him in a higher degree, if they took Nelson with them. 'I exist,' Mr. Beckford had written to Lady Hamilton on the 24th of November, 'in the hopes of seeing Fonthill honoured by his victorious presence, and if his engagements permit his accompanying you here, we shall enjoy a few comfortable days of repose, uncontaminated by the sight and prattle of drawing-room parasites.' Under these circumstances, Lady Hamilton besought the hero to accompany her to the country for the Christmas holidays,—an invitation he perhaps accepted the more readily, because (*vide* Miss Knight's 'Autobiography') he felt it incumbent on his honour 'to devote himself more and more to her, for the purpose of what he called supporting her.' Anyhow, leaving his wife to spend Christmas at the Arlington Street lodgings, to which they had moved from Nerot's Hotel, Nelson started with the Hamiltons for Fonthill on the 19th of December.

There were brave doings in Wiltshire in the Admiral's honour. Received on the eastern confine of the shire by Captain Windham at the head of his troop, the carriage in which Nelson travelled in the company of the Hamiltons was escorted by mounted yeomanry for twelve miles, through the long lines of country people, who had come from near and far to get a view of the nation's brightest and dearest hero.

At Salisbury, where he received the Freedom of the City, Nelson was cheered by a multitude more numerous and enthusiastic than any assembly, that before or since ever thronged the highways of the picturesque town, and blocked the approaches to the Council House; the riot of the tumultuous delight reaching its height when, on coming out of the municipal buildings, the Admiral recognized a seaman who had fought in the Battle of the Nile, and after greeting him with characteristic heartiness gave the happy fellow a handsome tip.

Though it can scarcely have yielded them the promised 'repose, uncontaminated by the sight and prattle of drawing-room parasites,' Mr. Beckford's entertainment of his celebrated visitors was worthy of the occasion. Welcomed with music to the demesne and escorted through the park by their host's regiment of volunteers, Nelson and his companions were received at the door of the mansion with a *feu de joie*. As the trio alighted from their carriage, the military band, ceasing to play 'Rule Britannia,' struck up 'God save the King.' A worthy occupant having been found for every guest-chamber of the millionaire's lordly pile, Lady Hamilton—leaning on the hero's arm and preceded by her fluttered and perpetually bowing entertainer—passed up the steps and into the house through a throng of excited people, gentle and simple, visitors and dependents, who on hearing the strains of 'Rule Britannia' had hastened with alacrity from salon and gallery, court and corridor, to swell the acclamations that greeted the 'famous three' on the outer terrace, or to deepen the

murmurous hum of admiration that paid Lady Hamilton courtlier homage, when she had crossed the threshold of Vathek's home. Flushed with delight and radiant with gratified vanity, the matronly Queen of Beauty seemed for the moment to some of her welcomers no less charming and bewitchingly fascinating, than she was on the occasion of her former visit to Fonthill, when she was still Emma Hart, and Romney's 'divine lady.' Her cup of happiness was for a trice full to the brim. Had Lady Nelson only been there to witness her rival's triumph, the cup would have overflowed.

Made in the winter, Lady Hamilton's second visit to Fonthill necessarily differed in several particulars from the visit she paid the same place in the summer of 1791. But the two entertaintments had perhaps a larger number of points of resemblance. In respect to the indoor diversions, there is little to be said of the winter visit, that was not said of the summer visit in a previous chapter. There were dinners, at which Lady Hamilton feasted heartily without being distinctly greedy, and drank the wine she loved above all other wines without drinking 'the glass,' that would have been scandalously 'too much.' There were concerts, at which Lady Hamilton and Banti sang together. Possibly there was the more music after each of the series of dinners, because Lady Hamilton had been recently advised by her sensations to refrain from dancing with her customary enthusiasm and perseverance. Of course, there were 'attitudes' by the Queen of Beauty; and if the writer who described these Fonthill Revels in the *Gentleman's*

Magazine (*vide* the Number for April, 1801) may be trusted, Lady Hamilton's impersonation of Agrippina, offering the ashes of Germanicus in a golden urn to the view of the Roman people, was an achievement of histrionic art, that entitled the performer to be rated with the greatest actresses of the English stage.

The Hamiltons, with Nelson, left Fonthill for the homeward journey on the 28th of December, and arrived in London on the following day.

One consequence of the meeting at Fonthill was Mr. Beckford's definite engagement to settle £2,000 a-year on his cousin for life, as soon as he should get the desired peerage with the contemplated remainder to the millionaire and his heirs, and further, in the same event, to secure to Lady Hamilton a contingent annuity of £500, to be paid to her yearly from the date of her husband's death to the end of her life. It is needless to say that nothing came of this scheme. Readers, however, may not imagine that it was relinquished soon after its conception, when Sir William Hamilton had obtained from the Government a pension of £1,200 per annum on the Irish establishment. Accepting this allowance for the term of his life, as a provision to which he had an indefeasible claim in recompense for long official service, Sir William Hamilton still continued to demand compensation for the losses and exceptional expenses he had sustained, in the concluding years of his diplomatic employment. Mr. Beckford also persisted in hoping for the settlement of his cousin's claims, that would have made him a peer. So late as the 1st of July, 1802, Mr. Pebbles, the agent-in-chief

of Mr. Beckford's West Indian estates, called upon Lord Nelson and Sir William Hamilton at Merton, to confer with them on measures still to be taken for the satisfaction of his patron's prime ambition. A man of energy and affairs, hopeful of soon sitting in Parliament for one of Mr. Beckford's pocket-boroughs, Mr. Pebbles pressed the Admiral and Sir William so urgently for a renewal of their exertions in the millionaire's behalf, that they determined to make another and stronger effort for the achievement of the design, which had now engaged their attention for more than a year-and-a-half. Nelson undertook to use all his influence with Mr. Addington for the desired end, provided his application to the Minister should be cordially and cogently supported by the Duke of Hamilton and the Marquis of Douglas; and to obtain this support of the Admiral's suit, Sir William Hamilton made a strong appeal to his powerful kinsmen. But all was in vain. Sir William failed to get the £2,000 a-year, Lady Hamilton took nothing by her hero's assault on the wary and courteous Addington, and Vathek Beckford died a commoner.

At war with Lady Nelson before he went to Fonthill, Nelson, on his return from Wiltshire to Arlington Street, found her in no kindlier mood towards himself and Lady Hamilton. Had she received him with a smiling face and show of undisturbed affection, one would not like her any the better for a demeanour, so indicative of insensibility, servile submissiveness, or hypocrisy. Had she been made of stone the wife, to whose arms he had so lately returned, after an

absence of years, would have been hurt by his action in leaving her for the Christmas holidays, at no requirement of duty, when he was daily looking for an order from the Admiralty, sending him off again to sea. She had the more reason to resent his conduct, because circumstances compelled her to regard it as an indignity, designed for her public annoyance and humiliation. She may well have discovered the death of his tenderness and chivalrous respect for her in the unfeeling levity and insolence, with which he left her at such a moment, to travel triumphantly through the country in the company of the notorious woman, with whom he had so recently made a long continental tour. The sorrow and displeasure with which she thought of Nelson, when he was amusing himself in the country, were necessarily qualified with emotions of tenderness for the man she still loved, and with reverence for his nobler qualities. But for Lady Hamilton the insulted wife can for the moment have had no gentler feelings, than those of repugnance and detestation. If she had not formed the resolve before the 19th of December, we may be sure Lady Nelson did not see her husband on his return to Arlington Street, without having determined that no order, menace, or entreaty from his lips should induce her ever again to sit at the same table, or remain in the same room, or exchange words of formal civility, with Sir William Hamilton's wife.

Of course, Nelson's bad treatment of his wife was not without extenuating circumstances. Knowing that no one but himself and his companion in error was aware of the deplorable incident, that had

occurred during the pleasure trip to Malta, he was far less blamable in requiring his wife to associate with Lady Hamilton, than he would have been, had the incident been notorious. Capable (that incident notwithstanding) of declaring on his honour that Lady Hamilton was nothing more to him than a dear and honoured friend, he is not to be judged as a man guilty of forcing his mistress into intimacy with his wife. Considerations of honour forbade him to withdraw abruptly from his familiar association with the woman, whom his wife could not tolerate. Though he greatly exaggerated, and in other ways misapprehended the services she had rendered him, it is not to be gainsaid that he was under obligations to Lady Hamilton. For more than two years she had been his friend. After contributing (as he believed) to his success at Aboukir, she had nursed him in sickness, and cheered him in moments of sorrow. The one brief madness of their otherwise wholly virtuous attachment would in a few weeks make him the father of her child. Was it for Nelson to break abruptly from the woman, to whom he was so strongly attached and so largely indebted—to throw her from him in callous selfishness at the moment she most needed his sympathy—because his wife thought far too ill of her, and the world cried 'Fie!' upon her? Could he have retreated from her just then, he would not have been Nelson—the Nelson who, now that he has been dead for more than eighty years, holds the heart of mighty England as wholly and firmly as he held it, when he went out upon the deep to win his last battle and die for us.

On reviewing thoughtfully and dispassionately all the circumstances of his unfortunate entanglement with a woman who, though less wicked than history has proclaimed her, was lamentably unworthy of his love, most readers will come to the conclusion, that towards the close of 1800 he was right in 'devoting himself more and more to her, for the purpose of what he called supporting her.' But, if Lady Hamilton was entitled to his sympathy, Lady Nelson had a yet stronger claim to his generous consideration. Having 'supported' Lady Hamilton by journeying publicly with her to Wiltshire, he should at least have returned to Arlington Street with a determination to be very careful for his wife's feelings, during the brief remainder of his stay on shore,—careful to say nothing to her, either in the hearing of others or when they were by themselves, that could quicken her animosity against Lady Hamilton, or in any way exacerbate her sense of injury. Unfortunately, if he formed any such resolve, he did not act upon it. Even as the strong have their seasons of weakness, and good people sometimes give their enemies occasion to charge them with hypocrisy, it is possible for generous and chivalric men to be once and again wanting in common civility to the weak. As a hero never shows to worse advantage than when he is betrayed into miserable contention with one of his nearest womankind, it must pain the reader, to think of the great and good Nelson bickering with his wife at their fireside, and even showing her discourtesy in the presence of a third person. But it rests on the evidence of one of his

partisans, that he was guilty of these offences at least on one occasion, during the few days that intervened between his return to Arlington Street and his departure for the fleet.

Mr. Haslewood was breakfasting with Lord and Lady Nelson at their lodgings in Arlington Street, on one of the earlier mornings of January, 1801, when Nelson put an abrupt period to 'a cheerful conversation on indifferent subjects' by speaking eulogistically of something which had been done or said by 'dear Lady Hamilton.' Flushing with indignation at the enthusiastic and unseasonable reference to the friend, with whom he had spent the Christmas holidays, Lady Nelson rose from her chair and declared with much warmth that she was weary of hearing praise of Lady Hamilton, and had made up her mind to withdraw from a humiliating position. According to Mr. Haslewood (writing from Kemp Town, Brighton, to Sir Harris Nicolas on the 13th of April, 1846,—more than forty-five years after the occurrence), 'Lady Nelson rose from her chair and exclaimed with much vehemence, "I am sick of hearing of dear Lady Hamilton, and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me," '—words to which Nelson is said by the same reporter to have replied with perfect calmness, 'Take care, Fanny, what you say; I love you sincerely; but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her otherwise than with affection and admiration.' Of Lady Hamilton's answer to these scarcely conciliatory words, Mr. Haslewood could remember no particulars save that she said something of her firm

resolve. 'Without one soothing word or gesture,' Mr. Haslewood wrote to Sir Harris Nicolas, 'but muttering something about her mind being made up, Lady Nelson left the room, and shortly after drove from the house. They never lived together afterwards.'

Bearing in mind that Nelson's eulogistic reference to Lady Hamilton was the last of a long series of provocations, and should be considered in connection with the many galling incidents that had preceded it, few readers will concur with Mr. Haslewood in regarding Lady Nelson's vehement rejoinder as an almost unprovoked outbreak of feeling. For more than two years she had lived in a state of extreme soreness, with respect to Lady Hamilton. From the hour, when she heard of her son's unfortunate display of emotion at the birthday *fête*, Lady Nelson had been whipped by rumours of her husband's singular friendship for Sir William Hamilton's wife. For months it had been known to her, that the mutual friendship was regarded in the Mediterranean fleet as a *liaison*. In the spring and summer of the year just ended, she had spent months in expectation of her husband's re-appearance in England, only to hear at the end of July, that he had at the last moment altered his plans, and started on a tour of pleasure with Lady Hamilton. From the hour of his long-deferred arrival in London, she had known that the town was chattering about his scandalous attachment to his fascinating friend, and wondering whether the Admiral's wife would submit meekly and uncomplainingly to the indignity put upon her. Mr. Haslewood knew, the whole town knew, how she had fainted at the theatre

from overpowering pique and fury, at the attentions her husband was lavishing in her presence on the woman, who was universally regarded as his mistress. Mr. Haslewood knew, and Lady Nelson was keenly sensitive that he like the rest of the world knew, how, leaving her to get through the Christmas in town as she best could, her husband had travelled to Wiltshire with Lady Hamilton, and spent the holidays with her at Fonthill. He had returned from Wiltshire to Arlington Street so recently as the 29th of December, 1800, and now on an early day of the New Year he had broken away from 'a cheerful conversation on indifferent subjects,' to speak to his wife and the guest at their breakfast-table of his 'dear Lady Hamilton.' Had Lady Nelson maintained her composure and self-command so far as to hold her tongue and keep her seat, Mr. Haslewood would have glanced from the corners of his eyes to see, whether she changed colour at the reference to her rival, had he not with an effort looked away from his hostess or stared hard at his plate, in order to spare her the additional annoyance of feeling herself the object of his curiosity.

Yet Mr. Haslewood could in his old age write as though there had been nothing for her to resent in her husband's outburst of enthusiasm for the woman, who was believed to be his mistress. 'To the day,' says Mr. Haslewood, 'of her husband's glorious death she never made any apology for the abrupt and ungentle conduct above related, or any overture towards a reconciliation.' Surely the ungentle conduct was on the side of the husband who, to put the case

mildly, had been so inconsiderate for her feelings. Surely it was for him to make the apology and the overture towards reconciliation. How in later time could she have decently made any such overture to him during his subsequent terms on shore, when he was domesticated with Lady Hamilton? It may, however, be admitted that Lady Nelson was less than duly mindful of her own dignity and her husband's honour when, in the presence of the visitor, she replied so warmly and acted so impulsively. In a quarrel between a husband and wife, the fault is seldom altogether on one side. There was fault on Lady Nelson's side, when in sudden anger she declared she would leave her lord, unless he gave up Lady Hamilton. Bearing in mind how soon he would be going to sea, she should have curbed her tongue and restrained her feelings, with a firm resolve to say nothing to precipitate a rupture, before he went off again to fight the enemies of his country. Had he, on returning from his next term of service, declared his purpose of persisting in a friendship that exposed her to social reproach, she would still have been in time to guard her dignity by saying, 'Choose between her and me.' In the meantime she should have been patient, for the sake of the man she still loved.

Though they never again lived together after this wretched row at their breakfast-table, Nelson seems to have called on his wife and taken formal leave of her, before he started on the 13th of January to serve under Sir Hyde Parker. From Southampton on the evening of that day he wrote to her, 'My dear Fanny, We are arrived, and heartily tired; and

with kindest regards to my father and all the family, believe me, your affectionate, Nelson,'—a note which he should have rendered sufficiently apologetic by adding, 'Dear Fanny, Forgive the husband, who loves you, what he repents.' It is doubtful whether Lady Nelson answered this note, which, though inadequate, was intended to soothe and conciliate her. If she disdained to answer it affectionately, she was guilty of another fault.

Possibly because he was nettled by her neglect to reply to the brief missive, Nelson addressed her in another strain from off Copenhagen some seven weeks later (4th of March) when he wrote her the last letter she ever received from him,—an epistle so harsh in sentiment and so offensively worded, that all who honour Nelson as he deserves to be honoured, must regret Dr. Pettigrew thought right to publish it. After reflecting on Lady Nelson's son with rude asperity, the writer concluded the brief letter with these words, 'Living, I have done all in my power for you, and if dead, you will find I have done the same; therefore, my only wish is to be left to myself; and wishing you every happiness, believe that I am, your affectionate,—Nelson and Brontë.'

Henceforth they remained asunder. But to Nelson's credit be it said, he never penned nor with his lips uttered a word to his wife's discredit. Possibly the case would in this respect have been different, had he been a poet with a constipated liver, and a power of venting his rage in scathing and poisonous satire. There were no proceedings in the Divorce Court, nor deed of separation by mutual agreement.

As for alimony, Lady Nelson knew she could trust to his sense of honour and liberality, and was herself too proud to sue him for more, had he been false to himself on such a matter of honour. Though he was poor for his rank, he allowed her £1,600 a-year—far more than any court would have decreed for her maintenance. When the irritations attending the rupture had subsided, he necessarily judged her generously. I doubt not that in his heart he honoured the proud and self-respecting woman, who cared nothing for the rank he had given her, when it ceased to be associated with his devotion, and who on finding he no longer loved her, had said, with noble indignation, 'Then I will not be your slave.' I conceive that, had they each lived another fifteen years, they would have come together again by force of their never-uprooted love, and that had they survived to old age, the grey-headed Nelson would have once and again reminded her proudly and tenderly, with simple and sailorlike frankness, of her fine courage in saying, 'I will have your whole heart or none of it.'

CHAPTER X.

LONDON AND GREEN FIELDS.

Nelson at Sea—Horatia's Birth—She is entrusted to Nurse Gibson—Nelson's Correspondence with Lady Hamilton—Mr. and Mrs. Thomson (*alias* Thompson)—Controversy about Horatia's Parentage—Sir Harris Nicolas in Error—Lady Hamilton sells her Diamonds—Her Reward for parting with them—No. 23, Piccaddilly—The Hamiltons in Town—Playing for the Hamilton-Beckford Peerage—Lady Hamilton's Apologists—Sir William Hamilton's Sale of Pictures—His Testament and Last Will—Nelson in Piccadilly—The Hamiltons and Nelsons at Box Hill—The Sojourn at 'The Bush Inn,' Staines—Nelson resolves to have a Country-house—He goes off again to Sea—Lady Hamilton house-hunting—Nelson's Purchase of Merton Place—The Hamiltons at Deal—Sir William Hamilton's Description of Merton Place—Nelson's first View of the Place—His Home on Shore—His Prayer for his Child.

1801 A.D.

WHEN Nelson started from London for Plymouth on the 13th of January, 1801, Lady Hamilton was expecting her accouchement before the end of the month—an expectation that was fulfilled by the timely appearance of the female infant (Horatia), who was born no earlier than the 29th, and no later than the 31st of January, 1801. That the father of this infant left London at the moment of his lively concern for the welfare of the mother in her time of peril, when by an urgent representation at the Admiralty he

could certainly have obtained leave to prolong his stay in London, shows how completely his tenderest feelings were subordinated to his regard for 'duty.' The same fact might also be produced in evidence to show how small the danger was, that he would be deflected from the path of duty by Lady Hamilton's weakness. If on this occasion she entreated him to see her through her trouble before leaving her, he had the strength to refuse her prayer. If from regard for his feelings or professional honour, or from no higher motive than a prudent desire to preserve his good opinion, she forbore to make the entreaty, she only exercised the self-control which seems always to have distinguished her conduct, whenever his sense of duty conflicted with her wishes.

Save that Lady Hamilton contrived to get through her illness without letting her husband discover or suspect her condition, nothing of importance is known of the immediate circumstances of Horatia's birth, which seems from uncertain testimony to have occurred at 23, Piccadilly, the house into which the Hamiltons moved on ceasing to occupy Mr. Beckford's mansion in Grosvenor Square. From one of Nelson's letters it appears that the invalid had some difficulty in getting a nurse. Another of his epistles shows that, in her sickness, she had the services and relied on the secrecy of more than one person. But the only matter of moment touching the clandestine incident is, that Sir William Hamilton had no knowledge of what was taking place.

Something more than a week after this furtive occurrence, Lady Hamilton brought her infant by

night in a hackney-coach to the house (9, Little Titchfield Street, Marylebone) of a certain Mrs. Gibson, who had engaged to take charge of the nursling, and, in accordance with the engagement, tended the child for some years. On the occasion of this secret visit, Lady Hamilton had no one in attendance upon her; but in later time she was often accompanied to Little Titchfield Street by Nelson, who also (according to the testimony of Nurse Gibson's daughter, Mrs. Johnstone) 'often came alone, and played for hours with the infant on the floor, calling her his own child.' In speaking to her daughter of the circumstances under which this infant of secret birth came to her hands, Nurse Gibson was certain that the little creature, when first committed to her care, was 'no more than eight days old.' Just as little Emily, soon after her birth, was put out to nurse with Dame Kidd of Hawarden, little Horatia was thus early confided to Dame Gibson. When little Emily was packed off to Hawarden, it was a question whether her mother should be described as a maid-servant out of place or a gay girl without a protector. But the gentlewoman, who brought little Horatia by night in a hackney-coach to Nurse Gibson's dwelling, was a lady of title, fashion, and celebrity, who was hopeful of soon being a peeress.

Of the opening months of Horatia's life we should know more, had not Nelson been careful to destroy the letters he received from Lady Hamilton in the February and spring of 1801, and should know less had she destroyed his letters, as he bade her in the following words: 'I burn all your dear letters, because

it is right for your sake,' he wrote to her from sea on the 1st of March, 1801, 'and I wish you would burn all mine —they can do no good, and will do us both harm, if any seizure of them, or the dropping even one of them, would fill the mouths of the world sooner than we intend.' Whilst careful to destroy her letters, Nelson, in writing to Lady Hamilton, used a curious kind of literary mystification, for the purpose of rendering his letters less easily intelligible to unauthorized perusers of the compositions. Sometimes the letters were addressed to Mrs. Thomson, and read like letters from her affectionate husband. At other times, addressing his correspondent by her proper style, and signing with his own name or his initials, Nelson affected to send messages from 'Mrs. Thomson's friend' at sea to Lady Hamilton's particular friend, Mrs. Thomson, on shore.* For example, in acknowledging on the 1st of February Lady Hamilton's announcement of their child's birth, Nelson wrote to her from his ship: 'My dear Lady, I believe poor dear Mrs. Thomson's friend will go mad with joy. He cries, prays, and performs all tricks, yet dare[s] not show all or any of his feelings. He has only me to consult with. He swears he will drink your health this day in bumper;'—words that were read by Lady Hamilton as, 'I believe I shall go mad with joy. I cry, pray, and perform all tricks, yet dare not show all or any of my feelings. I have only myself to

* Nelson and Lady Hamilton both spelt the name indifferently, Thomson and Thompson;—this want of uniformity of spelling being one of the minor indications of the fictitious nature of the correspondence.

consult with. I swear I will drink your health this day in a bumper.'*

Had Nelson invariably written in this mystifying style, when he had occasion to write to Lady Hamilton on matters touching their child of clandestine birth, the controversy about Horatia's parentage, in which Sir Harris Nicolas† played so ineffectual a part, might have been prolonged to this hour, by the less critical sort of disputants. But the Admiral sent Lady Hamilton by private hand one letter wholly free from mystification, in which he wrote (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life,' vol. ii, p. 652) on the 1st of March, 1801: 'Now, my own dear Wife, for such you are in my eyes and in the face of heaven, I can give full scope to my feelings, for I dare say Oliver will faithfully deliver this letter. You know, my dearest Emma, that there is nothing in this world that I would not do for us to

* Using 'Thomson' (*alias* Thompson) in this fashion for purposes of mystification in 1801, Nelson employed the same simple artifice in his subsequent correspondence with his enchantress.

† Admitting (*vide* 'Despatches and Letters,' vol. vii, p. 371) that epistles, parts of which are printed in his seventh volume, afford conclusive evidence that the 'Thompson' of the secret letters was Nelson, and that 'Thompson's child' was Horatia, Sir Harris Nicolas held that these 'Thompson' letters left it questionable whether Mrs. Thompson was Lady Hamilton. Further, on the mere strength of Mr. Haslewood's assertion that Lady Hamilton was *not* Horatia's mother, and that 'he could an he would' tell the real mother's name, Sir Harris Nicolas conceived himself justified in writing, 'and now, when the strong suspicion of her having been the mother of Horatia is at an end,' as though Mr. Haslewood's bare 'ipse dixit' had extinguished the suspicion by utterly disproving it. No doubt Mr. Haslewood was one of Nelson's confidential friends. But was it impossible for a man to be the Admiral's close and confidential friend, and yet be wildly mistaken about Horatia's parentage? Sir Thomas Hardy ('Kiss me, Hardy!') was one of Nelson's dearest friends and most trusted advisers; yet he was sure in 1835 that, instead of being Nelson's and Lady Hamil-

live together, and to have our dear little child with us . . . . . I love, never did love anyone else. I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one, and you, thank my God, never gave one to anybody else. I think before March is out you will either see us back, or so victorious that we shall insure a glorious issue to our toils. Think what my Emma will feel at seeing return safe, perhaps with a little more fame, her own dear loving Nelson.' On the morrow, the writer added in a postscript: 'Kiss and bless *our* dear Horatia,—think of that.'

It may cause the cynical peruser of this letter some trouble to decide, whether to be more amused by Lady Hamilton's audacity in telling Nelson that Horatia was her first-born child, or by the sailor's simplicity in believing the statement.

Whilst misleading her partisans with false assevera-

ton's daughter, Horatia was the daughter of a sailmaker named Thompson and his wife, Mrs. Thompson. Sir Thomas's story was minutely circumstantial, but on inquiry all the alleged circumstances were found baseless. Knowing how completely Sir Thomas was at fault in his honest story, it is passing strange Sir Harris Nicolas trusted so entirely to the bare, and not circumstantial, statement of another of Nelson's confidential friends. Here is an example, how in these mystifying letters Nelson sometimes revealed what he meant to conceal. On the 3rd (?) of February, 1801, he wrote with his own hand, 'My dear Mrs. Thomson, your good and dear friend does not think it proper at present to write with his own hand, but he charges me to say how dear you are to him . . . . . *I have given Lord N.* a hundred pounds this morning, for which *he will give Lady H.* an order on *his agents;* and *I beg that you will distribute* it amongst those who have been useful to you on the late occasion.' To maintain the concealment he aimed at, Nelson, for the words here printed in Italics, should have written, 'He has given me . . . . I will give Lady H . . . . my agents . . . . he begs that you will distribute, &c.'

tions and garbled papers to erroneous conclusions respecting her association with Nelson and Horatia's parentage, Lady Hamilton was careful to withhold from her dupes the remarkable letter, that would have shown them how they were being trifled with. Fortunately, however, she preserved the letter, which long after her death enabled Dr. Pettigrew to put Horatia's parentage beyond the pale of reasonable controversy.

It should be observed that, though he left London for Plymouth within a fortnight or three weeks of Lady Hamilton's accouchement, Nelson did not sail for the Baltic without having seen his child. Slipping away from the fleet, Nelson posted to London, arriving there on the 24th of February, 1801, and resting there for two days. The object of the flying visit was to see Lady Hamilton and to gaze upon her child. On the 2nd of March, 1801, he sailed from Spithead for Yarmouth and thence to the Baltic. Eight days later (10th of March) he wrote from sea to Lady Hamilton, 'I have seen and talked much with Mrs. Thompson's friend. The fellow seems to eat my words, when I talk of her and his child. I have had, you know, the felicity of seeing it, and a finer child never was produced by any two persons. It was in truth a love-begotten child! I am determined to keep him on board; for I know, if they got together, they would soon have another. But after our two months' trip, I hope they will never be separated; and then let them do as they please.'

Reproducing in his valuable, though far from faultless, book one of the many droll misrepresenta-

tions, by which Lady Hamilton's indiscreet partisans thought in her later time to strengthen her claim to a public pension, Dr. Pettigrew in reference to the ex-ambassador's financial difficulties remarks, 'Lady Hamilton *absolutely sold her jewels at a great loss for his support*, but Sir William fully relied upon the generosity of the British Government and nation to compensate Lady Hamilton for the great services she had been able to render her country.' The originators of the statement, that Lady Hamilton sold her jewels 'for her husband's support,' of course meant to imply at the least that, but for this wifely sacrifice of her diamonds, Sir William could not have lived in accordance with his quality. To the majority of readers, the words of course signified much more. That the recipient of a pension of £1,200 a-year and the owner of a landed estate, yielding a revenue sufficient for his dignified maintenance, was in no such urgent straits as the words suggest, there is no need to repeat. It is, however, true that Lady Hamilton parted with her jewels, for the prompter payment of the tradesmen, who furnished the house (No. 23) in Piccadilly into which the Hamiltons moved, on leaving Mr. Beckford's house in Grosvenor Square. Aiming at a peerage, Sir William and Lady Hamilton concurred in thinking they ought to maintain the appearance of being able to support the dignity with adequate splendour. Intent on figuring as a personage of the *beau-monde*, Lady Hamilton wished for a house in a fashionable quarter, where she could give grand dinners, brilliant routs, and concerts, that should be the talk of the town. To furnish such a house and

pay the bills for furnishing it, Sir William was for the moment unable. Having a prudent reluctance to buy plate and other furniture of London tradesmen on credit terms, he hesitated to set up the establishment his wife desired to have, until he could do so without running further into debt. Under these circumstances Lady Hamilton, not for her husband's support, but in order that she might have her town-house without delay, offered to sell her diamonds for money, that should be expended on the needful 'furniture, plate, et cetera.'

How about the 'great loss' she is represented to have sustained through thus parting with her diamonds? Probably the jewels were sold for less than the sum at which Lady Hamilton valued them. On selling their jewels, ladies seldom get a price equal to their expectations. But certainly Sir William Hamilton's wife *lost* nothing by her contribution to the charges of setting up the new establishment; for, to compensate her for the loss of her diamonds, Sir William on the 4th of February, 1801, executed a deed, by which he conveyed and assigned all 'the plate linen china glass furniture *ornaments pictures paintings* and household goods of every kind now standing and being in or about the capital messuage or mansion-house of him the said Sir William Hamilton situate at and being in Piccadilly' to Alexander Davison of St. James's Square, co. Middlesex, esq, *In Trust* to hold the same during the joint lives of Sir William and his wife Dame Emma Hamilton, and, in case Sir William should pre-decease his said wife, immediately on his death to convey the same chattels, &c., or such

of them as should remain in the hands of Sir William Hamilton at the time of his death, absolutely to the use of the same Dame Emma; And also In Trust to allow the said Dame Emma Hamilton during the joint lives of herself and her husband 'to hold use enjoy or dispose of the articles and other premises hereby assigned or expressed by her last will or testament &c.,' or during her said husband's life to dispose of the same chattels 'to the end and intent and so that the same may be wholly free from the engagement or controul of the said Sir William Hamilton and to all effects and constructions whatsoever be the separate exclusive and peculiar property of the said Dame Emma Hamilton.' Thus Lady Hamilton, in compensation for her diamonds, obtained the largest and most complete property she, as a married woman, could acquire, not only in the plate, furniture, &c., bought with the money obtained by the sale of the same jewels, but also in the whole of the other furniture of the house, including the 'ornaments pictures and paintings,' that were a part of her husband's valuable collection of works of art.—Thus, far from sustaining any loss through her magnanimous surrender of her diamonds 'for her husband's support,' she acquired several thousand pounds' worth of ornaments, pictures and paintings, &c., in addition to all the things bought with the diamonds. On such terms many ladies with diamonds would be well pleased to sell them.

That Nelson encouraged Lady Hamilton to speak of the sale of her diamonds as a noble example of wifely self-sacrifice, or at least fell in with her

humour of so describing it, appears from a letter he wrote to her from the Downs, on the 31st of August, 1801, on hearing that she and her husband thought of going for rural retirement to a place, which the Duke of Queensberry (one of Sir William's powerful kinsmen) had put at their service. 'If,' wrote the Admiral, 'you were to take the Duke's house, *a cake house*, open to everybody he pleases, you had better have a booth at once; you never could rest one moment quiet. Why did not the Duke assist Sir William, when he wanted assistance? why not have saved you from the distress, which Sir William must every day feel, in knowing that his excellent wife sold her jewels to get him a house?' As Nelson could write thus of Lady Hamilton's action in selling her diamonds to get a house for her husband, it is not surprising that, in later time, persons less accurately informed about the business wrote of her, as having supported her husband by selling her personal ornaments.

Sir William and Lady Hamilton, having taken possession of their home in Piccadilly no long while before little Horatia raised her first thin, sharp wail in this world, they did not let many weeks elapse before sending cards to their friends for a house-warming. Other entertainments followed in quick succession,—dinners for those of their acquaintances who cared chiefly for the enjoyments of the table, and concerts for the lovers of music. To Nelson at sea it was a matter for astonishment, and even for protest, that his friends, who a few weeks before had been complaining of their poverty, entered so

alertly on a way of living, that seemed likely to exceed their assured income. That in her correspondence with the hero on the deep, Lady Hamilton attributed the prodigality of her domestic arrangements to her husband's disposition, appears from a passage of the letter which Nelson dated to her on the 10th of March, 1801, when little Horatia had been little more than a month in Nurse Gibson's keeping. 'What,' wrote the Admiral, 'can Sir William mean by wanting you to launch out into expense and extravagance? He that used to think a little candle-light and iced water would ruin him, to want to set off at £10,000 a-year, for a less sum would not afford concerts and the style of living equal to it! Suppose *you* had set off in this way, what would he not have said?' Obviously, it had not occurred to the simple and unsuspicious sailor, that his adorable Lady Hamilton was in some degree accountable for the extravagance which he discommended, and that the concerts were given quite as much for the gratification of the lady, who liked to sing with the vocalists of the opera-house, as for the pleasure of her husband. Still it may be admitted that, for the moment, and indeed for the whole of that season, Sir William was more disposed to stimulate than to check his wife's taste for display and gaiety. As she had spent her diamonds in fitting the house, he thought it only fair that she should have the pleasure of filling her rooms with brave company. Playing for the Hamilton-Beckford peerage and a pension of two thousand a-year, the superannuated diplomatist conceived his chance of winning the double

prize would be heightened by ostentatious hospitality. Moreover, the season was still in its youth, when he was put in financial ease by a good sale of pictures. 'I am glad to hear,' Nelson wrote from sea to his child's mother, on the 11th of April, 1801, 'that Sir William's pictures sold so well, but believe me, before I would have sold a picture of you, I would have starved. I wonder Sir William could do it.' Could the pictures have been sold to advantage a few months earlier, Lady Hamilton would not have parted with her diamonds.

With her house in Piccadilly, her carriage and horses (she and Sir William each had a carriage), her numerous servants, her dinner-parties and musical parties, Lady Hamilton lived throughout the London season of 1801 in a style of show and luxury, affording a noteworthy contrast to the quiet and economical life she led in Edgware Road, when she was Romney's idolized model. As she had displayed her diamonds in London and at Fonthill before she parted with them, society had occasion to remark on the disappearance of the ornaments, unless she condescended to wear paste in lieu of the gems that had been converted into plate and furniture. Anyhow, with paste or without it, she made a brilliant figure in the world of fashion, though, with her diminished elegance and impaired charms, she cannot be conceived to have caused such sensation, as her beauty and accomplishments occasioned the town in the year of her marriage.

That people of the highest fashion and unimpeachable character went to her entertainments, notwith-

standing all that was whispered and muttered to her discredit, will surprise few readers who bear in mind how much more tolerant English society was of libertinism eighty years since, than it is at the present time. Moreover, though Lady Hamilton's relation to Nelson was freely talked about, people could still believe it compatible with wifely duty. Sir William and Lady Hamilton were not only still living together, but in their bearing to one another seemed to be animated by strong mutual affection. It was averred that the nature of Nelson's regard for and his association with the lady could not be unknown to her husband, who was not a man to be suspected of conniving at his own dishonour. Of Horatia's birth and Lady Hamilton's visits to Nurse Gibson's abode, the world knew no more than Sir William Hamilton. Beyond the narrow circle of Nelson's nearest relatives, and Lady Nelson's closest friends, it was not known that he and she had parted company; and even in that circle, the rupture was probably regarded as a transient severance. Nelson's brother, a clergyman of whom no one at that time spoke evil, was a frequent visitor at Lady Hamilton's house, whilst his wife,—the bright, clever little woman, who had everyone's good word,—maintained the friendliest relations with Lady Nelson on the one hand, and with Lady Hamilton on the other. It was asked, whether it was likely that this clergyman's wife would leave her daughter for weeks at a time in Piccadilly with a woman, whom she suspected of intriguing guiltily with her husband's famous brother?

Moreover, though they were known to live affec-

tionately with Lady Nelson, the Admiral's married sisters (Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Matcham) showed Lady Hamilton every mark of respect. No doubt, Lady Nelson was jealous, and not without cause, of the famous Beauty, and had been so foolish as to show her jealousy to the world. Goose enough to faint at the theatre, she had sulked in Arlington Street throughout the Christmas holidays, instead of going to Fonthill for the revels. Apart from Lady Nelson's jealousy, and a few facts that rendered it a natural and excusable state of feeling, there was literally no evidence that old Sir William Hamilton was a base and contemptible creature. It would be time to look more closely into, and think more gravely of this quarrel of two women, when Lady Nelson should take proceedings for a divorce. Whilst it was possible for people to take, or affect to take, this view of the Nelson scandal, it is not surprising that ladies of high degree (who had in former times been civilly treated by Sir William Hamilton in Italy) and the great peers and other august personages of the Hamilton connection, and the high official people who had long liked the ambassador, and the naval people who wished to stand well with the Admiral, and the Mayfair idlers of both sexes, with a natural taste for 'being in the swim' of the season's festivity, thronged Lady Hamilton's *salons*, whenever she threw them open.

But whilst the majority of the *beau-monde*—a majority consisting chiefly of the most frivolous and least scrupulous members of the coteries of fashion—saw no harm in going to Lady Hamilton's house, a

minority (not a small one) of the same polite circles studiously held aloof from the adventuress. Persons wishing to stand well with the Queen, of course kept away from the lady, whom Her Majesty had resolved never to recognise; and those prudent and timid persons comprised not a few individuals of both sexes, whom Lady Hamilton was especially desirous of numbering amongst her acquaintance. But for their disdainful neglect, Lady Hamilton was consoled by the civilities paid her by Princes of the royal family.

The season of 1801 was at its height when, on the 28th of May, Sir William Hamilton made the will (proved after the testator's decease by the sole executor, Mr. Charles Greville) by which he bequeathed an immediate legacy of £300 to Lady Hamilton, and an immediate legacy of £100 to Mrs. Cadogan, and further assigned to Lady Hamilton an annuity of £800 for the term of her life, secured to her on the revenue of Welsh estate, and a contingent annuity for life of £100 to Mrs. Cadogan, secured to her on the same revenue, in case she should survive Lady Hamilton, to whom the aforementioned £800 *per annum* was bequeathed 'in confidence that she will during her life provide for her mother as also in full satisfaction and in bar of any right title or interest she may have or claim in or out of' the testator's 'real estates or any part thereof by way of Dower or Free Bench or otherwise.'—On the 8th of March, 1803, when he was nearing his end, Sir William Hamilton appended to this will a codicil, whereby he raised the immediate legacy to his widow from £300 to £800, and further bequeathed a portrait of Lady

Hamilton and two guns to Lord Nelson, in 'token' (to transcribe the words of the codicil) 'of the great regard I have for his Lordship the most virtuous loyal and truly brave character I ever met with—God bless him and shame fall on those who will not say Amen.'

On his return from the Baltic with enhanced glory, at the close of the London season through which Lady Hamilton had 'supported her husband' with her diamonds, Nelson hastened from Great Yarmouth (where he landed) to 23, Piccadilly, which he regarded as his London home to the end of Sir William Hamilton's days. But the re-united friends were in no humour to pass in a hot and deserted town the few weeks Nelson could spend on shore. Running to the country, Nelson rested for a few days in the soothing quietude and delightful scenery of Box Hill with his clerical brother and Mrs. Nelson, their son and daughter, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and 'brave little Parker' (Captain Parker, R.N.)—soon to lose his life in the defence of his country. A few days later, the party of eight, with their carriages and servants, had taken possession of the Bush Inn at Staines, where Sir William found congenial sport in angling, whilst his companions loitered in the garden and took drives in the pleasant country. The holiday was soon over: for, on the 26th of July, 1801, the Lords of the Admiralty despatched Nelson to provide for the safety of the mouths of the Thames and Medway, see to the defences of the coast from Beachy Head to Orfordness, and counteract the measures that were being taken by the French for a naval ex-

pedition against England. On the following day (the 27th of July) Nelson wrote from Sheerness to Lady Hamilton, describing his condition in the brief postscript—'A little tired.'

One consequence of the brief rural vacation was Nelson's determination to have a house, that should be the country home of himself and his two friends, whilst he made their Piccadilly mansion his place of abode in town. Instructed to discover a dwelling suitable to his means and purpose in the neighbourhood of London, Lady Hamilton accepted the commission with delight, and spent the next three weeks in driving from one suburban neighbourhood, in search of a fit resting-place for her hero. At one time she thought of making him a householder of Turnham Green. A few days later she was thinking of a place at Chiswick. Had she spent three years in house-hunting, she could not have made a happier choice than Merton Place, co. Surrey—a cheery, well-built, homely villa, skirted with shrubberies, nestled in finely-timbered paddocks, and within an easy drive from Hyde Park Corner. A house to take the fancy of a wealthy banker indifferent to display, it was a place that could be maintained well and liberally on £1,500 or £2,000 a-year, as money went at the beginning of the century. 'My dearest Friend,' Nelson wrote from the Downs to his agent, on the 20th of August, 1801, who certainly in this business justified his confidence in her discretion, 'I approve of the house at Merton.' Liking the place from her account of it, he delighted in it, when he saw it for the first time on the 22nd of October, 1801. When the Hamiltons

went to Deal, where they stayed with Nelson from a late day of August to the 21st of September, 1801, a chief purpose of the journey was to confer with the proprietor of Merton Place on questions, touching the improvement, furnishing, and equipment of the residence which he had bought on Lady Hamilton's report, without having seen it. In October the Hamiltons went to Merton to welcome their hero to his modest estate. On the 16th of that month, Sir William Hamilton wrote from the house so pleasantly and in some respects so sadly associated with the Admiral's story,

'My dear Lord,—We have now inhabited your Lordship's premises some days, and I can now speak with some certainty. I have lived with dear Emma several years. I know her merit, have a great opinion of the head and heart that God Almighty has been pleased to give her, but a seaman alone could have given woman full power to choose and fit up a residence for him without seeing it himself. You are in luck, for in my conscience, I very believe that a place so suitable to your views could not have been found, and at so cheap a rate: for if you stay away three days longer, I do not think you can have any wish but you will find it completed here; and then the bargain was fortunately struck three days before the idea of peace got abroad. Now every estate in this neighbourhood has increased in value, and you might get a thousand pounds to-morrow for your bargain .... It would make you laugh to see Emma and her mother fitting up pigstyes and hencoops, and already the canal is enlivened with ducks, and the cock is strutting with his hens about the walks. Your Lordship's plan as to stocking the canal with fish is exactly mine, and I will answer for it that in a few months you may command a good dish of fish at a moment's warning.'

(*Vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' v. ii, pp. 224-5.)

This was the home, in which Nelson passed the

greater part of the term he spent on shore from the 22nd of October, 1801, to the 18th of May, 1803,—the longest period of repose he enjoyed after going to the Mediterranean in 1793. It was the home, where he uttered his last adieu to Lady Hamilton after visiting the bed-room of little Horatia, and on his knees praying the Almighty to protect and bless the sleeping child. It was the home he rendered historic, though the whole time he actually spent in it was considerably less than a year and half.

CHAPTER XI.

PICCADILLY AND MERTON.

Now and Then—Lady Hamilton's Deterioration—Her Influence over Nelson—Circumstances favourable to her Sway—Terms of Nelson's Absence from her—Times of their Personal Companionship—Relinquishment of the Project for the Hamilton-Beckford Peerage—The Nelsons and Hamiltons at Oxford—Ducal Discourtesy—The Tour to Wales—A Progress through Celebrations—Blenheim put to the Blush—Rejoicings at Milford Haven—Lady Hamilton's pecuniary Extravagance—Arrangement for paying her Debts—Bickerings at Merton and Squabbles in Piccadilly—Sir William Hamilton's Dissatisfaction with his Wife—Their frequent Altercations—He thinks of separating from Her—Their Reconciliation—Sir William's Illness and Death—'The forlorn Emma'—Nelson's Departure for the Mediterranean Station—Horatia's Baptism.

1803 A.D.

DIFFERING greatly in personal appearance from the Emma of Edgware Road, Lady Hamilton of 23, Piccadilly differed also in morals from Mr. Greville's *protégée;* and it cannot be said that the change in character, taste, and habits was to the advantage of the lady of fashion, celebrity, and equivocal position, who had sold her diamonds for the better decoration and equipment of her reception-rooms. The veriest angel of a woman would have lost something of her goodness in the atmosphere the Signora Hart breathed,

and in the society of the men and women, with whom Lady Hamilton consorted for some fourteen years in Southern Italy. As the Younger Pliny's mistress was at the best a faulty creature, whose girlhood had been reprehensible for worse faults than wildness, it is not wonderful that the Elder Pliny's wife returned from long residence in a luxurious court a distinctly deteriorated woman. Less to her shame than to the reproach of those who depraved her, it must be recorded that in 1800 she had survived her finest moral graces, as well as the subtler charms of her personal loveliest.

So careless in Edgware Road for her material interests, that Mr. Greville declared her absolutely indifferent to them, she returned to England with a hunger for money and the pleasures it could purchase, and with a fierce resolve to have her desire. In her earlier time, so precisely exact and punctiliously honourable in her pecuniary dealings, that Mr. Greville commended her for being nicely conscientious and precisely exact in such matters, the adventuress of 23, Piccadilly, had completely outlived her old reluctance to incur debts, without having a reasonable prospect of paying them punctually. Content in her old, but still not so very far away, Paddington time with simple food for the satisfaction of her healthily eager appetite, she had been so trained and petted into epicureanism as to have become an habitual *gourmande*. Never in that former time desiring stronger beverages than water, tea, and mild table-ale, the fine lady of Piccadilly drank wine daily up to the very boundary line of intemperance, causing the ladies of her ac-

quaintance to open their eyes with astonishment at her thirst for and delight in champagne. Happy, in those not very remote years, to spend her tranquil time in attending to the simple matters of her house, and pursuing her musical studies, when she was not chatting with Mr. Greville or sitting to Romney, the Lady Hamilton, whose friendship for Nelson had set countless tongues talking, was possessed by an incessant and insatiable craving for gaiety and dissipation. Truthful as sunlight so long as she had lived hard by Paddington Green, she was incapable of telling a fib even to escape Mr. Greville's displeasure. In the main, Lady Hamilton was still truthful. That is to say, she was still as frank, open, and sincere, as the charming naturalness of her manner declared her, when she had no temptation to be otherwise. But when they were likely to serve her purpose the great lady, whose house stood in Piccadilly, told fibs without compunction, and told them so cleverly that people believed them and persisted in extolling her candour and genuineness, notwithstanding all that was said against her. Deceiving her husband habitually, she sometimes practised on Nelson's credulity. An honest mistress when she went to Italy in the spring of 1786, she returned to England in 1800 a faithless wife.

It may be asked by readers, how it was that so faulty a woman held for several years the confidence of so good a man as Nelson? It is not difficult to answer the question. Nelson was less enamoured of what she was than of what he imagined her to be. It is in the nature of a generous and romantic lover to value his mistress chiefly for the qualities his fancy

attributes to her. Were it not so, poets and novelists would have less to say of love's illusions. Several forces combined with love to make Nelson exaggerate his Emma's good traits, and to blind him to her failings. His desire to justify to his own conscience the homage he rendered her, incited him to multiply and magnify her titles to his devotion. Mannish pugnacity against the wife, who had withdrawn herself from his control, confirmed him in his admiration of the woman she held in aversion. It was the easier for him to persist in idolizing Lady Hamilton, because she was cognisant and nicely studious of his conception of her nature, and in her desire to maintain her influence over him, was at infinite pains to speak and act in accordance with his opinion of her. In feeding his idolatry with false appearances, she was aided by her sympathetic temperament and her nice discernment of his misapprehensions respecting her. She was also assisted by the charming naturalness of her manner. Showing him so much of her true self as would contribute to his enthralment, she kept him in ignorance of those of her failings, that were likely to lower her in his regard. Notwithstanding his close intimacy with the Hamiltons, Nelson was imperfectly acquainted with the woman who made him believe Horatia was her first-born child. Had he known in the summer of 1801, all that the readers of this work know of Lady Hamilton's career up to that time, it may be questioned whether he would have bought Merton Place.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that, though it endured to the moment of his death, Lady Hamil-

ton's sway over Nelson was of no long duration. On the 13th of January, 1801, the day of his departure for sea immediately after Lady Nelson's withdrawal from him, Nelson was within four years and ten months (to speak exactly, four years, nine months, two weeks and a day) of his death. Had he passed this time (a considerably shorter period than the time he and Fanny Nisbet lived together in Norfolk) in conjugal domestication with Lady Hamilton, Nelson would have had better opportunities of forming a just estimate of her character than circumstances allowed the sailor, who was absent from her for nearly two-thirds of the four years and ten months. He saw nothing of her from the 13th of January to the 3rd of July, 1801 (five months and three weeks), from 26th of July to about the 26th of August, 1801 (one month), from the 21st of September to the 22nd of October, 1801 (one month), from the 18th of May, 1803, to the 20th of August, 1805 (two years and three months), from the 13th of September to his death (five weeks). Thus he was away from her for three years of the brief time of their association, subsequent to his severance from Lady Nelson. The terms of his personal companionship with Lady Hamilton between the 13th of January, 1801, and the hour of his death on the 21st of October, 1805, were:

	Year	Months	Weeks	Days
3rd July to 26th July, 1801			3	2
26th August, to 21st September, 1801			3	5
22nd October, 1801, to 18th May, 1803	1	6	3	5
20th August to 13th September, 1805			3	3
Year	1	9	2	1

The whole of the time they spent together cannot have exceeded one year, nine months, and fifteen days. Necessarily it was much less, for Nelson's engagements when he was on shore required him to be sometimes absent from the woman whose society was his chief source of pleasure; and till the 6th of April, 1803, (the day of Sir William Hamilton's death, which took place only thirty-two days before Nelson went off to sea for two years and three months) Lady Hamilton's domestic and social obligations precluded her, from spending so much time in Nelson's company, as she could have spent with him, had he been her husband.

During his stay on shore from the 22nd of October, 1801, to the 18th of May, 1803 (the only long term of companionship they had in England), Nelson had the fewer opportunities for studying his Emma's character, and getting beneath the fair show of her amiable demeanour, because they were always in the society of other people,—whether they were living in Piccadilly, or enjoying the green trees of Merton, or travelling about the country. During the season of 1802, life went at 23, Piccadilly, very much as life had gone there in the previous season,—dinner-parties, routs and concerts following one another in quick succession. The house was seldom without staying visitors; so that poor old Sir William, who longed for quietude, had cause to murmur querulously that his home was like an inn, and that the party at his dinner-table seldom numbered less than twelve or fourteen persons. At Merton Place there was the same sort of open house for visitors from London, though Nelson would fain have had fewer guests, less

racketting, and lower weekly bills. Living with the Hamiltons in this way, Nelson found in Lady Hamilton a delightfully complaisant and entertaining hostess, even as he had found her an always charming companion at Naples and Palermo. But his attachment to her and admiration of her were never tried and tested as they would have been, had they lived together, as he lived with Fanny Nisbet in the Norfolk parsonage house, in mutual dependence on one another for daily contentment and hourly diversion.

That Lady Hamilton hoped and schemed to compass a grant to the Hamilton-Beckford peerage till the summer of 1802, readers have already been told. But if she persisted till the end of the year in longing and pulling strings for the realization of the fantastic project, she can scarcely have been encouraged in the persistence by her husband, who certainly surrendered all hope in July, 1802, of winning the two thousand a-year from Mr. Beckford's exchequer. The terms, in which the Marquis of Douglas declined to raise so much as a finger in furtherance of the droll enterprise, must have made Sir William Hamilton regret having opened his mind to the Marquis on the affair, and may be assumed to have convinced the Fonthill millionaire that, if he tried to enter the House of Lords, he would not do so by clinging to his cousin's coat-tails and Lady Hamilton's skirts.

The month (July, 1802), that saw Mr. Pebbles in conference with Nelson and Sir William Hamilton about the peerage that was never granted, was also the month in which the Nelsons and Hamiltons (*viz.* Lord Nelson, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and

the Reverend Dr. Nelson with his bright little wife and son) started for the tour, that opened with the visit to Oxford, where Nelson was made a Freeman of the city and a D.C.L. of the university,—the same academic honour being at the same time bestowed on Sir William Hamilton. Before bidding Alma Mater farewell, the tourists (who had been joined at Oxford by Nelson's sister Mrs. Matcham, with her husband and son) made the excursion to Blenheim, that exposed them to a slight from the Duke of Marlborough, who (possibly because the ducal ladies had a disinclination to make Lady Hamilton's acquaintance), instead of welcoming the party to luncheon within the palace, sent to them in the park the refreshments, of which they declined to partake. From the scene of this rebuff, which has been attributed to the Duke's shyness, the tour was successful and triumphal to its last hour. Journeying from Oxford to Gloucester (where the Matchams went off by themselves to Bath), from Gloucester musical with multitudinous bells to Ross, thence to Monmouth by the river Wye, from Monmouth to Brecon, from Brecon to Milford, from Milford to Haverfordwest, from Haverfordwest to Swansea, from Swansea back to Monmouth, thence to Ross, from Ross to Hereford, from Hereford to Ludlow, from Ludlow to Worcester, and homeward by Birmingham, Warwick, and Coventry to the hero's home in Surrey, they travelled through a land, whose one object seemed to be the fit and affectionate treatment of the beloved admiral. Wherever they went, the cathedrals and churches rang out their joy wildly and well. At every point where they passed

from one shire to another, they were received by a fresh escort of yeomanry. What with militia and volunteers, all England seemed set on presenting arms in the Admiral's honour. As he and his party went upon the Wye, they passed through banks lined with spectators, and resonant with *feux de joie*, and the airs of 'God save the King' and 'Rule Britannia.' In the towns the populace went mad with delight at gazing at him. Cheering him loudly, they drew his carriage through streets spanned by triumphal arches. So many Corporations feasted and glorified him, that ere he returned to Merton on the 5th of September, his horses suffered from the weight of the municipal 'Freedoms in Boxes,' that were given him during the tour. At Birmingham, where he went to the theatre, medals were struck to commemorate his visit, and his carriage was escorted from the play-house by a multitude of torch-bearers. Whilst city and borough, market-town and hamlet celebrated his heroic worth in this enthusiastic fashion, all the great county-houses along his route put Blenheim to the blush, by proffering hospitality to the chieftain and his fellow-travellers.

The chief purpose of the Welsh trip being to inspect the works, which Mr. Charles Greville had been carrying out, during the last ten years, under parliamentary authorization, for the improvement of the harbour and development of his uncle's Welsh estate, there were grand rejoicings at Milford-Haven on the 1st of August, which, as the anniversary of the Battle of the Nile, was chosen for the principal day of the local *fête*. To render honour to Nelson, and celebrate

Sir William Hamilton's re-appearance amongst friends and dependents, whom he had not seen for many years, Mr. Charles Greville had invited the chief people of Pembrokeshire to the great dinner, at which the victor of Aboukir made a speech that called attention to the magnificence of the harbour, and Lady Hamilton was attended worshipfully by the three men, who were so strangely associated by her fortunes.

That Lady Hamilton's personal expenses had for some time considerably exceeded her quarterly allowance of £50, for her own and her mother's strictly personal needs, appears from the fact that, soon after her return from Merton, she was under the necessity of speaking to her husband about her debts, and confessing that they amounted to £700. If this admission was a complete and unreserved confession of her liabilities to tradesmen, the lady of fashion may perhaps be deemed guiltless of egregious prodigality during the twenty-one months, in which the debts seem to have been contracted. If Lady Blessington was right in thinking it impossible for a lady to dress, like a gentlewoman, on £800 a-year, unless she exercised nice and vigilant economy in every department of her personal expenditure, Lady Hamilton is not to be severely blamed for spending £600 a-year on her own and her mother's dress and casual requirements. Still it cannot be denied that the gentlewoman, who in seven successive quarters outran her quarterly income of £50 by so much as £100 a-quarter, was something less watchful over her expenditure than she should have

been, and might even be said to have entered boldly on the straightest and easiest course to financial ruin. That from the time of her return from foreign parts, in November 1800, to the summer of 1802, she spent at least £600 for every £200 she should have spent, will enable readers to account in some degree for the involvements that, within a few years of Nelson's death, lodged her in King's Bench prison.

Accepting his wife's confession, and answering her prayer for financial relief with his usual kindness, Sir William gave her an order on Coutts's for £120, and promised to pay the other £580 gradually, as the tradesmen sent in their bills and pressed for payment. Subsequently, in December, 1802, when her balance with Thomas Coutts and Co. had fallen to twelve shillings and elevenpence, he gave her further credit on his bankers for £130. Something more than three months later (31st of March, 1803) and little less than a week before his death, he directed his executor, in the already mentioned codicil to his will, to pay to her, in fulfilment of his promise to put her out of debt, the remaining £450 'out of the arrears due to his estate from the Treasury of the King's Minister at Naples.'

Could he do so without a sacrifice of the precise veracity that should always distinguish a personal historian, the present writer would gladly countenance and support all the pleasant things that have been written about the harmony, that to the last attended the domestic association of Nelson and the Hamiltons. But, unfortunately, it stands out in extant documents that, however agreeable it may

have been to the Admiral, and also to Lady Hamilton, in so far as her relations with Nelson were concerned, the curious association was much less fruitful of contentment to Sir William Hamilton than readers have been led to imagine. Upon the whole, the ex-ambassador was far from happy and at his ease in the joint-establishment. Soon after it became Nelson's town residence, Sir William began to fret at being something less than the master of 23, Piccadilly; and, though he did his best to feel at home in his friend's Surrey villa, he was not restful at Merton Place, after ceasing to be nothing more than a guest under its roof. Without ever questioning the purity of his friend's attachment to Lady Hamilton, the veteran saw with pain how much more concern she had for the Admiral's interest at Merton, than for her husband's interest at 23, Piccadilly. Acutely sensitive of the social disesteem and suspicion, which he knew himself to have provoked by acquiescence in a domestic arrangement, that necessarily quickened the scandalous chatter about his wife's attachment to Nelson, he was at times nettled to fury by the questions and hints of busybodies, who thought it 'only right, you know, to let the old man understand what people were saying, you know.' His position was the more painful and humiliating, because in proportion as he had more need of his wife's tenderness and sympathy, she became, or at least seemed to him to become, less considerate of his feelings. Whether the trio were in Piccadilly or at Merton, the veteran soon felt himself a burden and a source of embarrassment to his companions.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the whilom cheery and light-hearted old man grew dejected, fretful, peevish, and at times querulously exacting towards his wife; and that, instead of humouring him out of his ill-humour, and tenderly bantering him into brighter spirits, the always quick-tempered Emma answered him waspishly, when he worried her by his petulance, or wounded her by his gloom. In their altercations there was, of course, fault on both sides. If there were materials for judging between them, the trouble of forming the judgment would be bootless. It is enough to know the altercations became so frequent and bitter, that the angry husband thought seriously of withdrawing from an association, so fruitful of bitterness and contention. The two had gone far towards rupture, when Sir William Hamilton wrote this curious paper, and put it where it would be sure to come under her notice:

'I have passed the last 40 years of my life in the hurry and bustle that must necessarily be attendant on a Publick character. I am arrived at the age when some repose is realy necessary, and I promised myself a quiet home, altho' I was sensible, and said so when I married, that I shou'd be superannuated, when my wife wou'd be in her full beauty and vigour of youth. That time is arrived, and we must make the best of it for the comfort of both parties. Unfortunately, our tastes as to the manner of living are very different. I by no means wish to live in solitary retreat; but to have seldom less than 12 and 14 at Table, and those varying continually, is coming back to what was become so irksome to me in Italy, during the latter years of my residence in that country. I have no connections out of my own family. I have no complaint to make, but I feel that the whole attention of my wife is given to Lord Nelson

and his interest at Merton. I well know the purity of Lord Nelson's friendship for Emma and me. And I know how very uncomfortable it wou'd make his Lordship, our best Friend, if a separation shou'd take place, and am therefore determined to do all in my power to prevent such an extremity, which wou'd be essentially detrimental to all parties, but wou'd be more sensibly felt by our dear Friend than by us. Provided that our expenses and housekeeping do not encrease beyond measure (of which, I must own, I see some danger), I am willing to go on upon our present footing; but, as I cannot expect to live many years, every moment to me is precious, and I hope I may be allow'd sometimes to be my own master, and pass my time according to my own inclination, either by going [with] my fishing-parties on the Thames, or by going to London to attend the Museum, Royal Society, the Tuesday Club, and Auctions of pictures. I mean to have a light chariot or post-chaise by the month that I may make use of in London, and run backwards and forwards to Merton or to Shepperton, &c. This is my plan, and we might go on very well, but I am fully determined not to have more of the silly altercations, that happen too often between us, and embitter the present moments exceedingly. If really we cannot live comfortably together, a *wise* and well-*concerted separation* is preferable, but I think, considering the probability of my not troubling any party long in this world, the best for all wou'd be to bear those ills we have rather than fly to those we know not of.—I have fairly stated what I have on my mind, there is no time for nonsense or trifling. I know and admire your talents, and many excellent qualities, but I am not blind to your defects, and I confess having many myself. Therefore let us bear and forbear

'For God's Sake.'

On discovering that her aged and failing husband was capable of separating from her, should she persist in giving him what he deemed just cause for serious displeasure, Lady Hamilton may well have determined, by timely amendment of demeanour, to

prevent him from taking a step which, as he justly observed, could not fail to be painful to Nelson and hurtful to her reputation. If she hesitated to make this prudent resolve till she had consulted Nelson, one may be sure his influence was exerted on the side of propriety, friendly feeling, and wifely duty. Probably, he was neither consulted on the matter, nor informed of the degree to which she had incensed Sir William Hamilton. Anyhow, the dissension of the husband and wife closed in mutual reconciliation.

This happy adjustment of differences was followed at no long interval by the death of Sir William Hamilton, who, in his dying illness, received both from his wife and his friend the last and saddest services of affection. Nelson sate by the side of his dying friend throughout the last six nights of his mortal illness; and when the old man yielded his last breath, at 10.10 a.m. of the 6th of April, 1803, his pillow was supported by his wife, and his right hand was held by the seaman, who, in the course of the day, wrote to the Duke of Clarence, 'My dear friend Sir William Hamilton died this morning: the world never, never lost a more upright and accomplished gentleman.' Dying in ignorance of Horatia's birth, and in unshaken confidence that Nelson's friendship for Lady Hamilton was a platonic attachment, Sir William Hamilton persisted to the last in honouring Nelson as 'the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character' he had 'ever met.' Had he known of Horatia's birth, and all the circumstances of the one brief victory of passion that resulted in the child's existence, it is conceivable the generous old

man would have taken the true and charitable view of the one (possibly unrepeated) act, and, declining to qualify his testimony to the hero's goodness, would, all the same, have written in the codicil of his will, 'God Bless him, and shame fall on those who do not say *Amen*.'

On the day of her husband's death, Lady Hamilton wrote on a paper, that long afterwards came into Dr. Pettigrew's hands, 'April 6th. Unhappy day for the forlorn Emma. Ten minutes past ten, dear blessed Sir William left me.' So sensitive and emotional a woman was necessarily subdued by affectionate regret for the husband, who had raised her from a position of insecurity and shame to social eminence and wifely estate, and in the seventeen years of their familiar association had found his chief contentment in contributing to her happiness. Six weeks later, when Nelson (on the 18th of May, 1803) had started for Portsmouth, to enter on the long term of service that kept them apart till the 20th of August, 1805, she had stronger reason to style herself desolate and 'forlorn.'

Just five days before Nelson gave Emma Hamilton the farewell kiss, on his departure for the Mediterranean, their child was christened at Marylebone Church. The record of the ceremony, at which neither parent was present, stands in the Marylebone register thus:

Baptisms, 1803.
May 13. Horatia Nelson Thompson.
B. 29 October, 1800.

It has often been asked why the child's birth was thus ante-dated. The probable explanation of the mis-statement is, that in May, 1803, Nelson and Emma designed at some future time, when they should be the married parents of legitimate offspring, to account for Horatia's presence in their domestic circle by representing that she was an orphan child, whom they had adopted from motives of compassion, shortly before their return from the continent to England at the close of 1800.

CHAPTER XII.

BETWEEN TWO DEATHS.

Biographers at Fault—Sir William Hamilton's Financial Position in 1803—His Provision for Lady Hamilton—Her Hopes of a Pension—Origin of these Hopes—Sir William's Efforts for their Fulfilment—Nelson's Efforts to get her the Pension of £500 a-year—His Appeal to the Queen of Naples for this Purpose—Maria Caroline's reluctant and cold Response—Nelson's Mortification at the Queen's Coldness—His Pecuniary Allowance to Lady Hamilton—Particulars of her Income from April, 1803, to October, 1805—Her Intercourse with Nelson's Brother and Sisters—Her Visits to the Boltons at Bradenham Hall, co. Norfolk—Her Trip to Canterbury—Her Affection for Miss Charlotte Nelson—Horatia's Infancy—Nelson's Solicitude for his Child's Welfare—His Letters to the Child—The Widow at Merton—Alternations of Hope and Fear—Letters from Sea—Nelson revisits Merton—His last and shortest stay there—Southey's Melodramatic Story—The Hero's Death—The Nation's Joy and Grief—Lady Hamilton's Despair.

1803—1805 A.D.

BIOGRAPHERS have been strangely at fault in their statements respecting Sir William Hamilton's financial position in his closing years, and respecting the provision he made for his widow, who was forty years of age at the time of his death.

In Rose's 'Biographical Dictionary,' he is described as having 'died in indigence,' though to the end of his days he kept house in Piccadilly, had a pension of

£1,200 a-year, possessed a considerable real estate in Wales, and bequeathed to his favourite nephew and principal heir, Charles Greville, seven thousand pounds in the three per cents., and other moneys lying at Coutts's, besides an immediate and chief interest in the Welsh property.

Silent about the immediate legacy, the able essayist of the 'Temple Bar' (October, 1884) understates by a hundred pounds the annuity, with which Sir William Hamilton charged the Pembrokeshire estate for his widow's benefit. Forbearing to state the amount of the provision, to which he refers as though it were an insignificant pittance, Pettigrew declares it 'scarcely likely that Sir William would have left her with so little to supply her wants,' had he not been confident that on his death the 'Government would recognize her claims and provide for her.' Relying doubtless on some authority, whom he regarded as trustworthy, the usually accurate and always entertaining Dr. Doran says, 'Sir William left his widow totally unprovided for. He thought, as Nelson thought, the Government would not hesitate to make her an ample provision for her services.' Whilst it is certain that Sir William Hamilton never thought the Government would grant her an annuity, sufficient for the gratification of her extravagant tastes, it is no less certain that, for some time previous to his friend's death in 1803, Nelson was troubled by doubt whether the country would make any provision at all for her. Instead of leaving her 'totally unprovided for,' Sir William bequeathed to his widow an immediate legacy of £800, and an annuity of £800

for life, charged upon the Welsh estate. But these legacies were not the whole of the provision he may fairly be said to have made for her. At the time of his death, little more than two years and two months had elapsed since he assigned to a Trustee for her benefit 'the plate linen china glass furniture ornaments pictures paintings and household goods of every kind' in his Piccadilly House; and there is reason to believe that in April, 1803, she had not exercised, at least to any considerable extent, the power reserved to her under the Trust, to dispose of any or all of the same chattels during his life. What was the value of these goods does not appear. But it can scarcely have been less than £5,000, and probably was very much more. Let it be computed at £5,000,—a sum that, invested in Government securities, yielded at the beginning of the present century £250 a-year. However extravagant she may be, and however inadequate such a provision may be for her requirements, a widow with a life-annuity of £800 and other property to the value of £5,800, cannot fairly be described as having been left totally without provision.

If the provision was insufficient for a woman of her luxurious habits and costly tastes, Lady Hamilton was not surprised by its smallness; for Sir William Hamilton had been frank to her, respecting the circumstances in which she would be left. Having concluded that he could not in fairness to his nephew Charles charge the Welsh estate with more than £800 a-year for her benefit, Sir William told her so. From the end of the year 1800 (and probably from an

earlier date) she had known that by her husband's will she would take nothing more than an annuity of that amount, and a small immediate legacy, that would start her in her widowhood with a substantial balance at the bank. As he raised this immediate legacy, from £300 to £800, in the last week of his life, she found herself richer after his death by £500 than she had expected to be on that event. She was therefore spared the mortification of finding herself less liberally provided for than she had hoped to be, and consequently could not plead, in palliation of her subsequent extravagance, that she had contracted expensive habits, under the impression, that as a widow she would be much more handsomely endowed.

In Italy she had not been used by Maria Caroline for many months, as a channel of communication between the Royal Palace and the British Minister, before she entertained the notion that, in serving her own immediate social interests by acting in accordance with the Queen's wishes and instructions, she was rendering her country services, that should and would in due course be requited with a pension from the national purse. In nursing this pleasant anticipation, which she probably entertained in the first instance at his suggestion, she was steadily encouraged by her husband, who during their last years in the Two Sicilies, and afterwards from the moment of their arrival in England to the very day of his death, told her that she had rendered Great Britain services, that entitled her to pecuniary reward. Whilst pressing the Government for the pension that was granted him, Sir William had asked that she should be as-

sociated with him in the grant. Unable to get this recognition of her services, he asked in vain for an assurance that on his death her claim should meet with due consideration. Throughout the brief remainder of his life, he seized every occasion for forcing his wife's claims upon the consideration of ministers. Unsuccessful in his efforts for her benefit in the closing months of the Younger Pitt's long administration, he renewed them on Addington's accession to power. Begging for her in the closing weeks of 1800, he begged in her behalf to the moment of his death. Indeed, he may be said to have begged in her behalf after ceasing to breathe. For, when Mr. Charles Greville delivered to the King the Insignia of the Order of the Bath that had been worn by Sir William Hamilton, he is believed, in the execution of his dying uncle's solemn injunction, to have told His Majesty that the deceased knight's last prayer was, that 'his pension might be continued to his widow for her zeal and services.'

It is not, however, to be inferred from the account given by Dr. Pettigrew of this post-mortem petition, that Sir William considered his wife entitled to so large a pension as £1,200 a-year, though on his death-bed he may have conceived it to be just possible that the sovereign would, in his tenderness and benignity, concede so much to his foster-brother's last prayer. The pension, to which he deemed his wife entitled, was an allowance of £500 a-year for her life. At Dresden, when she brimmed over with indiscreet communicativeness to Mrs. Trench, Lady Hamilton revealed her hope of having 'half Sir

William's pension' continued to her after his death. But this hope of a pension of £600 exceeded Sir William Hamilton's estimate of her claims by £100 a-year. In the fruitless negociations touching the project for the Hamilton-Beckford peerage, to be granted in satisfaction of the petitioner's pecuniary claims, it was arranged that Lady Hamilton should, after her husband's death, have £500 a-year from Fonthill. In seeking the Marquis of Douglas's aid for the attainment of the wished-for peerage, Sir William spoke of his desire that Lady Hamilton should get the pension of £500 a-year, which, together with the £800 a-year he meant to leave her, would put her in sufficient affluence. Taking Sir William's view of the pension, to which the Patroness of the Navy was entitled, Nelson exerted himself to get her a pension of that amount; and, when he saw it was useless to make any further applications to Ministers in her behalf, he made the codicil to his will, by which he left her £500 a-year out of the revenue of the Duchy of Bronte, in fulfilment of the promise he made to her in these written words, sent to her from sea in November, 1804: 'I do not believe that Pitt will give you a pension any more than Addington, who[m] I supported to the last moment of his ministry. There is no gratitude in any-one of them. *However, if they do not do it, I will give it to you out of Bronte.*'

Having moved Ministers and official persons for the pension during Sir William Hamilton's life, Nelson redoubled his efforts to get the allowance for Lady Hamilton, as soon as she had become a widow. A

letter to Nelson by Lord Melville, dated from Wimbledon on the 17th of April, 1803, shows that within a few days of Sir William's funeral, the Admiral and Lady Hamilton both wrote to Lord Melville about the pension, and wrote so effectually, that his lordship spoke to Mr. Addington, in accordance with their wishes, on the 16th of April, when the premier 'seemed fully possessed of the circumstances of the case, and disposed to give favourable attention to them.' Having done that much in his friend's behalf before leaving England, Nelson wrote from the Mediterranean Station to powerful people, in furtherance of her cause. One of his extraordinary measures for effecting his purpose was to move the Queen of Naples, to bear testimony to the importance of the services, for which Lady Hamilton was seeking a material reward, and in doing so to intimate to the British Government how greatly it would please Her Majesty to know that the merits of so worthy a petitioner as the late Sir William Hamilton's widow had been recognized by her sovereign and country. 'With respect,' Nelson wrote warmly to Mr. Elliot, on the 7th of July, 1804, 'to the Queen's writing to this minister or that, whether Addington or Pitt, it cannot matter. It depends upon Her Majesty's feelings towards the best friend she ever had.' Three days later (July the 10th, 1804), he wrote to the Queen herself, 'Mr. Elliot has informed me, by writing, of what your Majesty wishes to say on the subject of writing to the Minister respecting the pension for your Emma. Poor Sir William Hamilton believed that it would have been granted, or it would have

been unpardonable in him to have left his widow with so little means. Your Majesty well knows that it was her capacity and conduct which sustained his diplomatic character during the last year in which he was at Naples. It is unnecessary for me to speak more of it.' Thus pressed by the Admiral, to whom she and her husband were deeply indebted, and for whose wishes they were bound by prudence and self-interest to be considerate, Maria Caroline reluctantly consented to intimate through the Sicilian Minister in England to the London cabinet, how highly she esteemed Lady Hamilton, and how lively a concern she took in her welfare. That Nelson looked for more cordial co-operation from Maria Caroline, and was far from satisfied with the result of his appeal to Her Majesty's grateful and affectionate regard for 'her Emma,' appears from passages of his letters to Lady Hamilton.

On the 27th of August, 1804, he wrote to the mistress of Merton Place, 'Respecting your business he' (*i.e.*, General Acton) 'says, "I see what you tell me, my Lord, on Lady Hamilton's settlement by Sir William; I think it very just that she should be helped. I have wrote to her Majesty on the subject, and she is pleased to answer me that she will do whatever is in her power on the subject, and has acquainted your Lordship lately by one of her letters." I suppose, my dear Emma, that letter is the one which I sent you, and if her application through Castelcicala is as cold, I do not expect much from it; never mind.' In November, he wrote to Lady Hamilton in the same tone of disdainful irritation, 'You will see what effect

your Queen's letter has through Castelcicala—a very pretty channel!' Two months later, however, it seemed for a brief while to Lady Hamilton, that she was on the point of getting her desire. On the 6th of January, 1805, Mr. Alexander Davison (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii, p. 448) wrote her a cheering account of his recent conversation with Lord Melville. 'It will,' Mr. Davison wrote, 'afford you great satisfaction to know how much Lord Melville interests himself in your favour. He tells me he has spoken to Mr. Pitt of the propriety of your having a pension settled upon you of £500 per annum, and that he will speak to him again very shortly about it. I asked Lord Melville if I might say as much to you. He immediately said, "Yes, certainly." He spoke very handsomely of you, and of your services in favour of this country when in Naples.' But Lady Hamilton was again disappointed of the reward, for which she had been asking and pulling strings for something more than four years.

It may not be imagined, however, that whilst vainly pursuing the prize she never won, Lady Hamilton had no means of subsistence but the provision for which she was indebted to her husband, whilst Nelson was away from England with his fleet. From the hour of her husband's death to the glorious and fatal day of Trafalgar, she received from Nelson in punctual payments an allowance of £1,200 a-year—an allowance that raised her yearly income to £2,000, to say nothing of her immediate legacy. During the same time she was as completely the mistress of Merton, with its furniture and cellar, as she would have

been had Nelson already given them to her. Doubtless she had expenses that were not manifest either to her ordinary acquaintance, or to the circle of her intimate friends. Nurse Gibson was a dependent, whom prudence enjoined her to pay handsomely. The secrecy of dependents is not purchased with a song; and at the time of Horatia's birth Lady Hamilton seems to have been compelled to put perilous confidence in more than one person of humble degree. But living chiefly at Merton so long as she wore widow's weeds, with no rent to pay for her pleasant home, Lady Hamilton might by the exercise of ordinary prudence have lived with dignity, entertained her friends liberally, and acted bountifully towards her trusted dependents, without exceeding her income of two thousand pounds a-year. I have no conclusive evidence that her expenditure outran so ample an income during Nelson's life. But the magnitude of the pecuniary involvements, that compelled her to seek help from her friends before Nelson had rested three years in St. Paul's Cathedral, causes one to suspect that financial embarrassments had been growing upon her from the first year of her widowhood, and possibly from a still earlier time.

Whilst Nelson was at sea, Lady Hamilton lived on affectionate terms with his brother and sisters, receiving them at Merton for staying visits, and making trips to their homes in different parts of the country. 'I long,' Nelson wrote to her on the 12th of July, 1803, 'to hear of your Norfolk excursion, and everything you have been about, for I am ever most warmly interested in your actions.' In the autumn of the fol-

lowing year (1804) she was again with the Boltons at Bradenham Hall, co. Norfolk, the wooded home of the Norfolk Haggards, that more than half-a-century later became the birth-place of the author of *King Solomon's Mines*. In the summer of the same year (1804) she was staying for some time with the Nelsons at Canterbury, where the Reverend Dr. Nelson had a prebendal stall. Possibly Dr. Pettigrew slightly overstated the case, in recording that the prebendary, though, 'as a clergyman, he could not but feel the impropriety of Nelson's mode of life with Lady Hamilton, hesitated not to place his children under her roof, *to entrust one of his daughters* at least to her guidance and controul, and to heap adulation upon her, in order that she might exercise the great influence she possessed over his brother for his advancement.' But though it may be questioned, whether the Doctor's daughter Charlotte (afterwards Lady Bridport) was 'almost exclusively under Lady Hamilton's care and education for six years,' the evidence is superabundant, that the girl stayed for months at a time under Lady Hamilton's roof in Piccadilly, and from the spring of 1803 till Nelson's death was more at Merton Place than with her parents. At all times fond of children, Lady Hamilton conceived a genuine affection for this child, and possibly liked her company none the less because her presence at Merton was testimony that, whatever rumour might say of Nelson's relation to his friend's widow, it was a relation that had the sanction of his clerical brother.

In telling Captain Ward, in 1828, that Horatia 'remained with Nurse Gibson till she was five or

six years old,' Mrs. Gibson's daughter (Mrs. Johnstone) seems to have overstated the period of the child's residence in the nurse's dwelling. Mrs. Gibson may have been the child's nurse for five or six years, and even for a much longer time; but some of Nelson's letters from the Mediterranean dispose one to think that in the spring of 1804, when she was little more than three years and a month old, Horatia became a permanent feature of the Merton circle, though she was occasionally in Nurse Gibson's charge during the next year and a half. Giving directions for improvements and other matters at his Surrey home, Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton, on the 14th of March, 1804, 'The footpath should be turned. I did shew Mr. Haslewood the way I wished it done; and Mr. —— will have no objections, if we make it better than ever it has been; and I also beg, as my Horatia is to be at Merton, that a strong netting, about three feet high, may be placed round the Nile, that the little thing may not tumble in; and then you may have ducks again in it. I forget at what place we saw the netting; and either Mr. Perry or Mr. Goldsmid told me where it is to be bought. I shall be very anxious till I know this is done,'—words showing plainly, that Nelson looked upon it as settled, that little Horatia would henceforth live chiefly (if not altogether) at Merton, and be often playing on the lawn near the ornamental water. The child was at Merton when Nelson came back from sea on the 20th of August, 1805, and he left her there three weeks and three days later, when he drove from his house for the last time.

The passage in which he gave the directions for his child's preservation from death in the duck-pond, is only one of numerous passages of his letters, in which the hero, who was familiar with the dangers of the deep, displayed a fine and touching care for his offspring. In the opening month of the same year (20th of January, 1804), he sent the barely three years old child a present that must have delighted her prodigiously, together with a brief note giving her permission to wear the gift (a watch) 'on Sundays and very particular days,' when she was dressed, and had 'behaved exceedingly well and obedient.' Three months earlier (on the 21st of October, 1803), when the tiny pet could of course neither read a word of the writing, nor understand the epistle on its being read to her, the father, who might at any hour die in battle, dated from the '*Victory*, off Toulon' the pathetic letter in which he told her how he had recently made a codicil to his will, bequeathing her £4,000. 'I shall only say, my dear child,' he said, at the ending of the epistle, penned with the design of making her, years hence, think tenderly of him, when he possibly should have been as many years in the grave, 'may God Almighty bless you, and make you an ornament to your sex, which I am sure you will be, if you attend to all Lady Hamilton's kind instructions; and be assured that I am, my dear Horatia, your most affectionate father,—NELSON AND BRONTE.'

In imagining Lady Hamilton's life at Merton, readers should therefore think of it as the life of a gentlewoman who, possessing an income more than

adequate to the maintenance of her dignity, enjoyed the companionship of all the persons, with the exception of her absent hero, who were most dear to her. It made for her contentment, that she had for her daily companion the mother whom she had cherished from the time they lived together in Paddington, and towards whom, it may be averred without reserve of any kind, she never failed in filial fondness and devotion. At all times of her career delighting in children, she had in one of Prebendary Nelson's daughters an object of affectionate interest and a source of domestic diversion. From the spring of 1804, the presence within her walls of her last-born child afforded her a field of sympathetic activity, from which she was peculiarly qualified to draw enjoyment, and now perhaps drew all the more happiness, because circumstances had hitherto denied her the delight, that results to nervous and emotional women from the unrestrained indulgence of the maternal instinct. Living on terms of affectionate intimacy with Nelson's brother and married sisters, she was encouraged by their not altogether disinterested complaisance to regard herself as a member of the family, to which she hoped ere long to be united by marriage. Upon the whole, she was fortunately placed, and had many causes for thankfulness. It not being in the nature of an adventuress to suffer acutely from compunction for the injury she has done, or for the anguish she occasions, a defeated rival, Lady Hamilton, at this point of her career, would have been a happy woman, had it not been for her mind's disquieting undercurrent of ceaseless

anxiety, and its occasional acute alarms for Nelson's safety. She had no fear of losing her sway over his affections, so long as he should live. But the Admiral, so reckless for his own safety, when guns gave forth their thunder, might any day be swept from the forces of this life.

Still, though the undercurrent never ceased altogether from troubling, and the alarms continued to come and go, Lady Hamilton's prevailing mood was hopefulness:—hope that the Admiral would escape the cold touch of Fate, confidence that he would win greater glory and brighter fame, conviction that all the honour and wealth he snatched from danger would be shared with her. He would come out of the fire of successive battles; and, when he had done with fighting, he would be more than ever her lover. He would rise to be the English Duke of Thunder, even as he was the Sicilian Duke of Bronte, and in the course of years she might become his wife and Duchess,—yes, a double-Duchess, like the handsome Duchess of Argyll, who had been so good to her in former times at Naples, when she was nothing better than the Signora Hart. At the opening of 1803, two lives stood between her and the place to which she aspired. One of those lives had passed away. The other might soon come to an end. Lady Nelson, ever a delicate woman, had of late years suffered much from ill-health. Now she was wrathful and wretched. Anger and mortification would not tend to prolong her days.

Nelson himself encouraged Lady Hamilton to hope, and even to entreat the Almighty, for the removal of

the *one* remaining obstacle to their marriage. As he was being wafted to the scene of his glorious death, he wrote to her from off Plymouth, 'I entreat you, my dear Emma, that you will cheer up. We will look forward to many, many happy years and be[ing] surrounded by our children's children. God Almighty can, when he pleases, remove the impediment;'—startling words of strange evidence that, after Lady Nelson had withdrawn from his society, Nelson was so far from thinking his attachment to Lady Hamilton a sin for which he needed the divine forgiveness, as to be capable of thinking that the Almighty, out of His illimitable goodness and mercy, might regard it with favour, and satisfy its desire. From the Admiral's letters to Emma, several other passages could be produced in evidence that he had promised to marry her at the earliest opportunity.

In her prevailing mood of hopefulness, Lady Hamilton was sustained by a steady stream of letters from sea. Unfortunately, most of those letters are known to us only by the book, which affords sufficient grounds for questioning the authenticity of numerous passages of its printed documents, and even for thinking some of its compositions wholly spurious. But when severe scrutiny has purged these letters of their romantic seasoning and sheer fiction, the residue affords a mass of testimony to the simplicity of Nelson's nature, the tenderness of his heart, the honesty of his manners, and the generous beauty of his attachment to the woman, whom he should not have loved. Is it wrong to speak thus tenderly of the misdirected passion? On the contrary, is it not

well for people to be reminded, once in a while, that in rare and exceptional cases men may be greatly good, even though they are in some respects living ill, and undeserving of the severest censure, even when they are doing what social sentiment justly declares to be very wrong?

Animated by affection, that avoiding protestations of its depth and vehemence reveals both qualities by tender and sensitive considerateness for the feelings and welfare and daily comfort of the person to whom they were addressed, these simple, frank, warm-hearted, right-minded letters could not have been written by any but a good man. Moreover, Nelson could not have written them, had he not deemed Lady Hamilton essentially a good woman. How he came to think so far too highly of a woman who, though much less evil than historians have declared her, was a very faulty creature, is perplexing. But personal history is fruitful of such perplexities. Because it is puzzling, it is none the less true that the greatest martial hero of England in the present century thus thought of the woman, whose very picture, hanging in his cabin with her child's portrait near it, was not more beautiful to his vision, than sacred to his reverential fancy.

So the time went fairly well with Lady Hamilton at Merton Place till the hour of the 20th of August, 1805, when a slight, small man, with a scar on his brow and deep lines in his furrowed visage, leapt from a carriage at the villa's door, and putting his sole remaining hand on her shoulder looked into her eyes for the welcome, that was wine to his soul. The

happy meeting was followed all too soon by the last sad parting. They had not spent a fortnight together, when at an early hour (5 a.m. of the 2nd of September) Captain Blackwood of the *Euryalus* came to Merton, on his way from the sea to the Admiralty, with momentous news for the Admiral, who (ever an early riser when in health) was already up and dressed. The combined fleet had put into Cadiz. 'Depend on it, Blackwood, I shall yet give Monsieur Villeneuve a drubbing,' Nelson ejaculated repeatedly, when he had heard the news. Again and again, since Southey put the story into his charming book, it has been told how, after giving this characteristic utterance to a purpose he was not the man to relinquish at a woman's prayer, Nelson lacked for a few brief minutes the nerve to tell Lady Hamilton, how soon his brief holiday would end. As Southey tells it, the story almost requires us to conceive it possible, that at this moment Nelson might have fallen miserably beneath his own high standard of heroic worth, and have failed to complete his glory, had not Lady Hamilton urged him to do his duty to England.

According to the story, after Captain Blackwood's departure, Nelson told Sir William Hamilton's widow that he had done enough for his honour, and won enough for his contentment. Why then should he risk losing all he had set his heart on enjoying? 'Let the man trudge it who has lost his budget,' he said, in his homely way. He was happy where he was; his health had improved during his fortnight's rest; as for more glory and higher rank, he would not give sixpence to call the king his uncle. He was talking

in this way, as he paced up and down one of the walks of his garden,—the quarter-deck as he called it, 'the Admiral's walk' as it came to be called in later time—when Lady Hamilton told him 'that she did not believe him, that she knew he was longing to get at the combined fleets, that he considered them his property, that he would be miserable if any man but himself did the business, and that he ought to have them, as the price and reward of his two years' long watching, and his hard chase.' After rallying his fortitude in this style, she said, in a vein fit for a transpontine drama, 'Nelson, however we may lament your absence, offer your services; they will be accepted, and you will gain a quiet heart by it; you will have a glorious victory, and then you may return here, and be happy.' Regarding her with tearful eyes, Nelson ejaculated, 'Brave Emma! Good Emma! If there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons!'—a piece of stilted, vain-glorious fustian, of which Nelson was incapable.

The probable truth of the story is that, after telling her what he meant to do, and showing by voice and look the strength of his purpose, Nelson talked of his inclination for inglorious repose, in order to put his Emma in the congenial position of a heroine, advising him to do what he intended to do, and what she knew no woman's words could prevent his doing. Of course, the woman, who never put herself between the hero and his duty to England, had no wish to hold him back from this opportunity of crowning his career. Jealousy for his honour and the selfish promptings of her own ambition made her

desirous he should win more glory and wealth. Had she in her heart wished to keep him by her side, fear of his displeasure, dread of losing the good opinion which she prized more than all her other possessions, would have made her keep the wish unspoken.

Eleven days later (13th of August, 1805), after kneeling in prayer at his child's bedside, and kissing his dear Emma for the last time, Nelson drove from the home he was fated never to revisit. Nine weeks and six days later (21st of October, 1805), he commended them to his country, and died. There is no need to speak of the great victory, or repeat the incidents of the Admiral's death. They belong to a story that is written in the brain and heart of every English man and every English woman:—a story that, for more than eighty years, has fired generous English boys with a noble ambition to resemble Nelson, in living and dying for their country.

When the glorious and dismal tidings reached England, and passing from port to port and from town to town, from hamlet to hamlet and from homestead to homestead, made all the people of all the various sorts and conditions of men for a brief while feel and think alike, the country had perhaps never before been so deeply and strongly moved by two conflicting emotions,—an impulse to rejoice and an impulse to mourn, to leap for gladness and to sink under a subduing sorrow. The enemies of England were shattered and scattered, but England's chieftain was dead. In every breast, stirred by this combat of feelings, joy for the glory and blessings of the

great success contended with grief for the fallen warrior, the leader who had been so frank and fearless, so tender and true, so magnanimous to his rivals, so steadfast to his friends, so considerate for his 'tars,' so generous to all men.

But to the woman who had loved him intensely,—perhaps all the more intensely because of the selfishness that qualified her affection for him—the tidings brought grief, unrelieved by exultation at his triumph, unmitigated by a single thrill of patriotic emotion. For the moment, it afforded her no comfort to reflect that he had clothed himself with imperishable glory, and would be the favourite and prime hero of his race throughout the coming ages. He had been her love and delight, her honour and power, the foundation of her hopes for higher rank and brighter dignity. He had gone from her, and her honour, power, and hopes had perished with him.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER NELSON'S DEATH.

Lady Hamilton's Financial Position—Nelson's Provision for Her and Horatia—Had she Debts at the Time of Sir William Hamilton's Death?—Did Debts grow upon her before the Battle of Trafalgar?—Her quick March to Pecuniary Ruin—She is compelled to leave Merton—Asks the Duke of Queensberry to buy the Place—Causes of her Embarrassments—Mr. Charles Greville's Death—Lady Hamilton's Relations with Nelson's Kindred—Why the Nelsons 'made' and ceased 'to make' the best of Her—Biographical Slanders against the First Earl Nelson—Lady Hamilton's unreasonable Conduct—The Publication of the famous Codicil—Consequence of the Publication—'The Friends' and 'The Enemies'—Their long War of Words—Final Survey of Lady Hamilton's 'Claims' and 'Services'—Her rapid Deterioration—Her Stay at Richmond—At Bond Street—Her last Will and Testament—Her Vile Slander on the Queen of Naples—Prisoner in the King's Bench—Anniversary (1813) of the Battle of the Nile—Evidence of Postal Marks—Her Liberation from Prison—Her Flight to Calais—Date of the Flight.

1805—1814 A.D.

THOUGH it plunged her in deep and stupefying woe, from which she emerged to talk with egotistic boastfulness of his glory, as though it were her peculiar property, and in a large measure a thing of her creation, Nelson's death did not, as many persons have imagined, reduce Lady Hamilton to comparative poverty. The Admiral had made a far larger provision for her necessities, and also for her luxurious ease, than is generally known.

By his will and certain of its codicils he left her (1) his diamond star, (2) a sum of £2,000, (3) an allowance of £500 per annum for the term of her life out of the revenues of his Duchy of Bronte in the Farther Sicily, and (4) Merton Place, *viz.*, the villa, with its furniture, outhouses, offices, gardens, and pleasure-grounds, and such parts of his real estate in Merton, Wimbledon, and Mitcham as she should select, and as should not altogether, with the aforesaid gardens, &c., exceed seventy acres of land,—an estate that may be computed to have been worth at least £10,000. It was valued at a higher sum, and, offered to purchasers under favourable circumstances, could have been sold for £12,000, or even £14,000. In estimating the value of the annuity from the Bronte estate, readers must remember that, at the date of Nelson's death, Lady Hamilton was still in her forty-third year, enjoyed good health, and bade fair to live to old age. Moreover, the trustees, to whom he bequeathed £4,000 for the benefit of little Horatia, were instructed by the testator to pay yearly to Lady Hamilton the interest of the same £4,000, for her to spend at her discretion on the child's maintenance and education, till she (Horatia) should have completed her eighteenth year. Hence the hero assigned out of his estate considerably more than £20,000 (say £25,000) for the endowment of his illegitimate offspring and the child's mother. This provision was made by Nelson for a lady, to whom Sir William Hamilton had bequeathed some two and a half years earlier a well-secured yearly income of £800, and an immediate legacy of £800, to say

nothing of the furniture and *objets d'art*, &c., of 23, Piccadilly, appraised at £5,000, which he settled upon her soon after their return to London from Italy.

Thus, if she had not contracted debts beyond her income, nor otherwise lessened her resources by some kind of extravagance or imprudence during the two years and something more than six months that intervened between her husband's death and Nelson's death, Lady Hamilton entered on what may be called the closing term of her singular career—*i.e.*, from Nelson's death, in October, 1805, to her own death, in January, 1815—with these several sources of income:

	PER ANN.
(*a*) Sir William Hamilton's immediate legacy of £800, yielding	£40
(*b*) Her income from Sir William Hamilton's Welsh estate.....	£800
(*c*) Nelson's legacy of £2,000, yielding	£100
(*d*) Her annuity from the Bronte estate	£500
(*e*) The interest of the £4,000 settled on Horatia	£200
(*f*) Merton Place, which could have been let for	£500
Total yearly income.....	£2,140

This schedule takes no account of interest for the £5,000, for which the pictures, plate, and other furniture of 23, Piccadilly, could have been sold.

Had she decided to leave Merton, and establish herself elsewhere, she would have had a clear income of £2,140 for her housekeeping and personal expenses. Preferring to live at Merton, she had the sufficient income of £1,640 a-year. Readers who question the sufficiency of the income will dismiss the doubt after visiting the villa (which still stands within an easy drive of Regent Street), if they bear in mind the several reasons why an income of that amount was

in the earlier years of the present century a better income than £2,000 a-year at the present time. Though she had some poor relations at Liverpool, and other poor relations (such as Sarah Reynolds and Cecilia Connor*) in or near London, to whom she gave money and discarded raiment with characteristic freehandedness, Lady Hamilton seems at this time to have had no near kindred who can be regarded, *i.e.*, fairly described, as dependent on this income, with the exception of little Horatia and Mrs. Cadogan, —the one little girl, who was clothed and nurtured for some forty pounds a-year; and the thrifty, active, busy, managing Mrs. Cadogan, who delighted in housekeeping, and knew better than most women how to

* Whilst dealing munificently with her other cousins, Connor *alias* Carew, Lady Hamilton conceived a vehement detestation of Mary Anne Connor, who seems to have tattled indiscreetly about her famous cousin's history and affairs. 'I do not,' she wrote in a destroyed will, dated at Merton on October 7th, 1806, 'leave anything to Ann or Mary Ann Connor, the daughter of Michael and Sarah Connor, as she has been a wicked story-telling young woman, and tried to defame her best friends and relations.' Speaking yet more precisely of this wicked, story-telling young woman in a later destroyed will, dated at Richmond on October 16th, 1808, Lady Hamilton says, 'I declare before God, and as I hope to see Nelson in Heaven, that Ann Connor, who goes by the name of Carew, and tells many falsehoods that she is my daughter, but from what motive I know not, I declare that she is the eldest daughter of my mother's sister, Sarah Connor, and that I have the mother and six children to keep, all of them, except two, having turned out bad; I therefore beg of my mother to be kind to the two good ones, Sarah and Cecilia. This family having, by their extravagance, almost ruined me, I have nothing to leave them; and I pray God to turn Ann Connor's, *alias* Carew's, heart. I forgive her, but as there is a madness in the Connor family, I hope it is only the effect of this disorder that may have induced this bad young woman to have persecuted me by her slander and falsehoods.' These two destroyed wills are printed in Sir H. Nicolas's 'Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson,' vol. vii, pp. 387, 388.

keep house economically. A gentlewoman, who is mistress of a sound, well-furnished house, and a clear income of at least £1,600 a-year, has no strong claim to compassion on the score of her poverty, when she has no one to provide for but herself, her one child and a pensioner of Mrs. Cadogan's quality.

In considering the sufficiency of Lady Hamilton's apparent means for the satisfaction of her apparent requirements, from the hour of her husband's death to the time when her pecuniary embarrassments constrained her to invoke the aid of her friends, readers should be mindful that, though in the later years of her association with Sir William Hamilton circumstances disposed her to financial extravagance, she had for a much longer term lived under conditions, that schooled her to be habitually economical in matters of personal expenditure. In Edgware Road, whilst maintaining an appearance of gentility, she knew how to make the most of her half-crowns. Throughout the earlier term of her residence at Naples, whilst figuring brightly in the gay capital, the Signora Hart dressed herself well and her mother somehow on a curiously small allowance. Even when she had risen to be a chief lady of Maria Caroline's entourage, she was required by Sir William Hamilton to keep her personal expenditure for herself and her mother within the allotted £200 a-year; and, though he supplemented the £50 a-quarter with occasional gifts of jewellery, it is certain that Sir William did not raise the sum of the regular payments, and that she seldom gave him occasion to reprove or pardon her for outrunning her personal

income, up to the time when Maria Caroline set 'her Emma' up with silks and satins for the remainder of her Mediterranean career.

To escape the difficulty of believing that the woman, who for a series of years spent her pin-money so carefully and cleverly, could not contrive to live within the ample income that came to her from her husband's will and Nelson's munificence, one is inclined to suspect that, before Sir William's death, she was encumbered with debts of which he knew nothing, and that, after his death, debts multiplied upon her whilst she lived at Merton under Nelson's protection. No doubt, during his last illness, Sir William was under the impression he was leaving his wife free of creditors; but the lady, who gave birth to Horatia without allowing Sir William to discover her state of health, was capable of having secrets from her husband. Nelson also appears to have left Merton for the last time, without imagining that his enchantress was troubled by financial embarrassments; but the woman, who made him think Horatia was her only and first-born babe, did not tell her hero every detail of her own story. Still I am not aware of any direct evidence that the liberal revenue, which certainly came to her from her husband's estate and Nelson's estate, was powerless to afford her pecuniary ease, on account of the magnitude of her long-growing debts.

It is, however, certain that, in April, 1808, when her husband had been dead only five years, and Nelson had been dead for about half the time, Lady Hamilton had already so greatly exceeded her means,

as to be under the necessity of asking her friends, what steps she had better take for the satisfaction of her creditors, and the re-arrangement of her affairs. Thus soon after Nelson's death, it was made manifest to Lady Hamilton that, to escape from embarrassments which threatened to put her at no distant date in a debtors' prison, she must sell the house and land which Nelson had bequeathed to her. In the spring of 1808, it was computed by Mr. Willock, of Golden Square, that Merton Place, with its furniture, exclusive of books and wine, was worth £12,930. For a few months, the debtor nursed a hope of finding a purchaser of the estate at this price, and getting quit of her debts by means of the sale. But seven months later, when she had vainly implored the Duke of Queensberry (her husband's cousin) to buy the villa and all its contents (with the exception of the portraits of Sir William Hamilton, Nelson, and Maria Caroline) for £15,000, Lady Hamilton was assured that she took far too hopeful a view of her position. A thorough examination of her liabilities showed that she owed £8,000 to creditors, exclusive of the £10,000 required to pay off annuitants, who had furnished her with the means of persisting in a course of reckless and quickly ruinous expenditure. These figures are taken from Dr. Pettigrew's book. For the payment of debts and the extinction of annuities, the residue of Lady Hamilton's property was now valued at £17,500, *i.e.*, a sum less by £500 than what was needful to pay off both classes of creditors. In the absence of particulars, one can only open one's eyes in amazement, and close them

in perplexity, at so staggering a statement of totals.

No woman ever went to financial ruin with less excuse for doing so. In the April of 1803, soon after liberating her from all her acknowledged debts, Sir William Hamilton left her an immediate legacy of £800, and a well-secured pension of £800 per annum. Sir William was no sooner in his grave than Nelson planted her at Merton, with an additional allowance of £1,200 a-year. Thus, whilst living rent-free in a well-furnished house from the date of her husband's death to the date of Nelson's death, she had a clear income of £2,000 a-year. Nelson's arrangements for her comfort after his death were munificent. Yet, within three years of that event, she had so squandered her ample provision, as to be in danger of immediate arrest for debts to tradesmen and money-lenders. The £800 left her by Sir William Hamilton, the £2,000 left her by Nelson, and the monies she raised by granting annuities, had all slipped like water through her fingers, and nothing remained of the provision made for her by her two principal benefactors, but the interest of the four thousand pounds settled on Horatia, and so much of her two pensions (£1,300 a-year) as might remain for her sustenance, after the sale of Merton and the satisfaction of the claims of her creditors and annuitants.

How did she waste so much money in so short a time? For the most part, the money had been squandered in profuse hospitality, and the usual forms of ostentatious prodigality. She had dressed beyond her means, and kept a better carriage and

costlier horses than were needful for her position. Not content with her home in the country, where her London acquaintances could have visited her, she had spent two successive seasons in town, entertaining a mob of dangerous friends at her house in Clarges Street. At a time when she was living thus profusely on credit and borrowed money, she was required to pay the Herald's College a heavy bill for the ridiculous patent of the absurd arms (Per pale Or and Argent, three Lions rampant, Gules on a chief Sable, a cross of eight points of the second) that were granted to her on the 19th of November, 1806. She seems also to have suffered severely from a pecuniary misadventure, arising from a generous indiscretion rather than from prodigality. Writing, in 1814, to her nephew, the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville (Mr. Charles Greville's brother) about her financial involvements, she attributed them, at least in a considerable degree, to 'her good nature in being bail for a person whom she thought honourable.' Of course no statement made by Lady Hamilton in her later time respecting her affairs is a statement to be received with implicit confidence, or without suspicious mindfulness of the inexactness that qualified most of her utterances in her closing years. But to the nephew, to whom she looked for payments of her Hamilton annuity, after his brother Charles's death in 1809, she would scarcely have written such words, had not circumstances in some degree justified them. Writing to him for the purpose of inducing him to send her money, she would hardly have penned words directly at variance with what

he probably knew of the principal cause of her pecuniary distress. It may, therefore, be assumed that one of the immediate causes of her withdrawal from Merton, and appeal to her friends for assistance, was her folly in becoming surety for some one who, on escaping from gaol, left her to pay the penalty of misplaced confidence. During the same period she was doubtless drained of much money by her necessitous cousins, though she may be assumed to have exaggerated their exactions, when she wrote in the destroyed will (16th of October, 1808) about her cousins Connor. She is said to have gambled, but I have no evidence that she lost much money by cards or dice.

Whilst Lady Hamilton was living with wild and reckless prodigality at Merton and in Clarges Street during the two years next following the victory of Trafalgar, she quarrelled bitterly with Nelson's clerical brother William, and dropped in the esteem, without falling altogether out of the friendly regard, of other members of the Admiral's family. To the busy and excited people, who sided with Lady Hamilton in this quasi-family contention, it appeared that, while Nelson's sisters were distinctly wanting in generous consideration for the woman whom their brother had loved, the Earl who had succeeded to the Admiral's dignities treated her with scandalous harshness, ingratitude, and malignity. Thinking this, they expressed their low opinion of the Earl in terms of excessive fervour. To believe all they averred to the Earl's shame, is to believe that, after fawning for years on Lady Hamilton, and using her influence

for the attainment of his selfish ambitions, he was quick to cheat, insult and defame her, as soon as she had lost the power to do him good and work him harm. By successive biographers it has been recorded, with scathing disdain for so egregious an example of human falseness, how this clergyman thought no praise too great for his brother's mistress so long as he could hope to win through her influence a bishopric or a deanery, and how a few months later, when he no longer needed her favour and feared her displeasure, he became keenly alive to the wickedness of her nature and the infamy of her career.

It is not the present writer's purpose to offer the first Earl Nelson to the world's regard, as a faultless priest or stainless gentleman. On the contrary, he concurs in much that has been urged to the discredit of the whilom Norfolk parson, who lacked the scholarship and moral graces that usually distinguish the notables of the clerical order, and was in various respects a most unsatisfactory brother for so exemplary a hero as Nelson. But justice requires it to be asserted in this chapter that, though he was an inferior and rather vulgar creature—a noisy, self-indulgent priest, whose professional merit would have been fully rewarded by his appointment to the poorest vicarage of his native county—the Rev. William Nelson, D.D., prebendary of Canterbury, and first Earl Nelson by Fate's contrivance, was not so despicable a person as successive biographers have declared him. Of the several charges brought against the Earl by Lady Hamilton's violent partisans, the gravest is that he forebore to prove at Doctors' Commons

the famous codicil, by which Nelson commended Horatia and her mother to the nation's care, and kept the existence of the document from the country's knowledge, until Parliament had voted the money for the maintenance of the hero's nearest kindred and successors; his conduct in thus withholding the paper being attributed to his opinion that, in proportion as it might operate to Lady Hamilton's advantage, the publication of the writing would work to the disadvantage of the Nelson family. 'The Earl,' says Pettigrew, 'fearful that Lady Hamilton should be provided for in the sum Parliament was expected to grant to uphold the hero's name and family, kept the codicil in his pocket until the day £120,000 was voted for that purpose. On that day he dined with Lady Hamilton in Clarges Street, and hearing at table what had been done, he brought forth the codicil, and throwing it to Lady Hamilton, coarsely said she might now do with it as she pleased. She had it registered the next day at Doctors' Commons.'

This statement is strangely wanting in justice and truth, and Dr. Pettigrew is certainly none the less reprehensible for making the statement, because in subsequent pages of his Memoir of Lady Hamilton, he published with insufficient perspicacity certain facts, that demonstrate the essential falseness of the libellous allegation. The Earl may have given the paper to Lady Hamilton in Clarges Street, immediately after hearing of the parliamentary vote; and on giving her the paper he may have spoken words that were deficient in delicacy. But it is absolutely untrue that he kept the paper in his pocket, *i.e.*, withheld it

from the knowledge of those, to whom he was bound in honour to exhibit the writing, until the money had been voted for himself and his family.

The existence of the document and also its substance appear to have been known to individuals, who were Lady Hamilton's especial friends in ministerial circles, even before they were known to Nelson's brother. The *Victory* in its homeward passage, with Nelson's lifeless body on board, encountered adverse winds and rough weather, so that she did not reach Spithead before December, 1805. The hero's interment in St. Paul's took place on 9th January, 1806. As soon as the well-named ship had anchored off Spithead, Captain Hardy hastened to Cuffnells to the Right Honourable George Rose, who, on the 9th of December, 1805, weeks before the interment, and months before the parliamentary vote for the Nelson family, wrote to Lady Hamilton a long letter, containing these words: 'You will learn from the Captain that Lord Nelson, within the hour preceding the commencement of the action in which he immortalized his name, made an entry in his pocket-book, strongly recommending a remuneration to you for your services to the country when the fleet under his command was in Sicily, after his first return from Egypt, on which subject he had spoken to me with great earnestness more than once.' In the same long letter the Right Honourable George Rose promised Lady Hamilton, that he would take an early opportunity for communicating the memorandum to the prime minister, and supporting its prayer to the best of his ability. This promise would of course have been fulfilled by

the most cordial and staunch of Lady Hamilton's supporters in high official circles, had it not been for Pitt's unanticipated illness and death. Thus soon after its arrival in England, was the codicil made known to the Privy Councillor, who undertook so promptly to use all his influence with the prime minister, for the achievement of the Admiral's purpose in making the entry in his pocket-book. Had Earl Nelson wished to keep the writing a secret from the persons, most capable of rendering its prayer effectual, he could not have done so, because they were no less cognizant than he of the existence and purport of the composition. There is no tittle of evidence that he had the wish. His action accords with the opinion, that he desired Lady Hamilton to have the full benefit of so solemn a record of his brother's desire.

When he proved his brother's will, with its seven codicils, in London on the 23rd of December, 1805, he took with him to Doctors' Commons the pocket-book containing the famous entry, and conferred with Sir William Scott on the propriety of dealing with the memorandum as an eighth codicil. It was the opinion of certain high official persons that, as it spoke freely of Maria Caroline's action in assisting the British fleet, the famous entry should not be published to the Queen's possible injury; and as the writing was not then dealt with like the other codicils, Sir William Scott seems to have concurred in this opinion. As the memorandum touched no item of the Admiral's estate, and in no way whatever affected the executor's power to deal with the estate, there was, of course, no need

to prove the so-called eighth codicil, which, though drawn in the form of a codicil, was not really a codicil, but merely a memorandum of a strong desire that two individuals should be cared for by the nation, and of the considerations which in the memorialist's opinion justified the desire. It having been decided that there was no need to prove the memorandum, which in no way related to the testator's estate, and that, under the circumstances, it was better to regard it as no part of the Admiral's testamentary writings, Nelson's brother forbore to ask for probate of the note of commendation. But instead of 'putting it in his pocket,' in order that it should be seen by the fewest people possible, William Nelson left the note in the hands of Sir William Scott, who was known to hold a strong opinion in favour of Lady Hamilton's claim to a pension. Writing to Lady Hamilton from Canterbury, when her mind was more occupied by her renewed hopes of getting the long-desired £500 a-year than by grief for the loss of her hero, Lady Charlotte Nelson (afterwards Lady Bridport) said, 'Sir William Scott came on Friday, and left us on Monday. He slept at our house. He talked a great deal about you, and says that you have great claims on Government, and we all sincerely wish they would do all they ought.'

The so-called codicil, about which there has been so much strong writing, remained in Sir William Scott's custody from the 23rd of December, 1805, to the 15th of February, 1806, when Nelson's brother recovered it from the judge (who wished well to Lady Hamilton) and carried it off—not to keep it

hidden in his pocket, but to lay it before Lord Grenville, who had succeeded Pitt in the premier's office, and who, from having been Foreign Secretary at a time when Lady Hamilton acted as a channel of intercommunication between her husband and Maria Caroline, was peculiarly qualified to estimate the importance of the services, on which she based her claim to the nation's gratitude. In a memorandum, written by the first Earl Nelson, touching his action in respect to the famous codicil, it is said: 'Accordingly Lord Nelson' (the writer is speaking of himself) 'took it from Sir William Scott and gave it' (*i.e.*, the pocket-book) 'to Lord Grenville on the 15th of February last, and at the same time he read it to his Lordship and strongly pointed out to him the parts relative to Lady Hamilton and the child, and in doing this Lord Nelson observed to Lord Grenville that he thought he was most effectually promoting the interest of Lady Hamilton, and doing his duty, in which Lord Grenville acquiesced.' The writing was made known to Lady Hamilton's special champion, the Right Honourable George Rose; it was carried by the first Earl Nelson to Doctors' Commons and left in Sir William Scott's hands for seven weeks and five days; it was laid by Earl Nelson before the prime minister. Yet we are required to believe that Nelson's brother 'kept the codicil in his pocket,' *i.e.*, hidden away, lest it should operate to his disadvantage, in respect to the public grant for the maintenance of the dignities conferred on the hero during his life, and the higher dignity awarded to his family after his death.

It is neither surprising, nor to their discredit, that

Nelson's nearest kindred, without actually breaking with Lady Nelson, took towards Lady Hamilton the only course that offered them a fair chance of maintaining their affectionate familiarity with the man, who had been a steadily dutiful and considerate son to his old father, had at every point and turn of his career overflowed with generous tenderness for his sisters, and had been to his brothers what he was to every man with whom he joined hands—a staunch, loyal, and unassuming friend. To the brother, who had ennobled them by his achievements and seized every occasion for furthering their welfare, the Reverend William Nelson, Mrs. Bolton, and Mrs. Matcham were under heavy obligations; and, whilst owing him loyal service for the many services he had rendered them, it is certain that they regarded him with the strongest affection for qualities, which would have endeared him to them, had he never risen to be captain of a '74.' No shame to them that they did their utmost to live on easy terms with Lady Hamilton, and to think the best of her. It is not to be supposed that they ever in their hearts thanked her for causing the rupture between him and Fanny Nisbet, putting him at war with his stepson Josiah, and throwing a cloud of scandal over his brilliant fame. Small cause had they to delight in her and rate her as a benefactress. But they were right in straining a point, and in truth several points, for the maintenance of harmony between themselves and the lovely woman, under whose dominion their brother had fallen. Though it was indicated by prudence, the way they took towards Lady Hamilton was none the less recommended by

love; and when, in a domestic difficulty, near kindred take the course, which is at the same time most agreeable to their affection, and most convenient to their self-interest, they should be assumed to have chosen it from generous rather than from sordid considerations. In dealing prudently with Lady Hamilton, William Nelson and his sisters probably felt they were doing what was best for Lady Nelson's chance of eventual reconcilement with her husband.

It was the easier for Nelson's nearest kindred to 'make the best' of the lady, whom they must have regarded as a distinctly inconvenient and injurious intruder into their domestic circle, because circumstances spared them the necessity of thinking the worst of her intimacy with the Admiral. The terms, in which Nelson assured his father of the innocence of his attachment to the Patroness of the Navy, had utterly extinguished the old clergyman's suspicions, and fully satisfied him there was nothing to reprehend, on moral grounds, in his son's curious association with Sir William Hamilton's wife. Since their father's mind was so completely set at rest on the suspicious point, it was the less difficult for his daughters to think the intimacy a platonic attachment. With his sure knowledge of Horatia's parentage, the cynical reader of this page may smile at old Mr. Nelson's simplicity; but though he may smile and smile, he will think thrice, and then hesitate, before declaring it impossible for Nelson's nearest relations to have believed, that his regard for the Patroness of the Navy was a sinless sentiment.

Dr. Pettigrew was rash and hasty in saying that, as a clergyman, William Nelson must have 'felt the

impropriety of his brother's mode of life with Lady Hamilton,' and was guilty of a deliberate outrage of social sentiment 'in placing his children under the roof' of the woman, whom he must have regarded as the Admiral's mistress. If Dr. Nelson believed that his brother's alliance to Lady Hamilton was a platonic attachment, he only took the view which, after a careful consideration of the circumstances, Sir Harris Nicolas was strongly disposed to take, and scores of clever essayists have taken, of the same perplexing affair. Some readers of this chapter will, perhaps, concur with the present writer in thinking it upon the whole less probable, that the habitually truthful Nelson was wholly untruthful on this particular business (to his *father* as well as other people), than that the incident, which resulted in Horatia's birth, was a never-repeated incident, and that, apart from the *one* incident, the intimacy *was* platonic, *i.e.* (to use Sir Harris Nicolas's expression) *was not* 'in the usual sense of the word of a criminal nature.' It certainly makes for this view of the singular friendship that, though he had no second child by her, Nelson could so soon before his death write hopefully to Lady Hamilton of a time when they would have 'children,' should the Almighty remove the one impediment to their marriage.

Whilst it is neither surprising, nor to their discredit, that during his life Nelson's nearest kindred lived on friendly terms with Lady Hamilton, there appears no sufficient reason for censuring them harshly because they saw less of her after his death. They did not withdraw from her with an abruptness, that would

have been insulting, and might therefore be stigmatized as cruel. Lady Charlotte Nelson (afterwards Lady Bridport) wrote to her with sympathetic affectionateness after the Admiral's death. The first Earl Nelson moved Lord Grenville to compass the fulfilment of the desire, expressed in the famous codicil. For months after his brother's death he was in the habit of calling upon, writing to, and dining with Lady Hamilton. That she remained on affectionate terms with the Boltons for some time after Nelson's death appears from the destroyed will (dated on 7th October, 1806), in which she bequeathed Merton to Mrs. Bolton's heirs, in case Horatia should die without issue, and without making by her last will another disposal of the estate. That she was never treated with disrespect or coldness by the Matchams appears from the fact, that she appointed Mr. Matcham to be an executor of her last will, and confided her daughter to Mrs. Matcham's care. Extravagantly untrue things have been said of the way in which Nelson's people abandoned the poor woman, as soon as her favour ceased to be valuable to them.

That they saw less of her and liked her less in the three years next following Nelson's death, than in the four preceding years, was less due to their selfishness than to her perversity. Assiduous in conciliating them so long as Nelson lived, she became less than duly considerate for their feelings when he was dead. On recovering from her first and violent grief for the loss of her hero, she displayed a disposition to talk of his greatness as though she were largely accountable for it, and of the dignity that had come from his

achievements to his kindred, as though they had reason to thank her for it. As her association with Nelson had in various ways been injurious to him, the Admiral's brother and sisters may be pardoned for remembering how hurtful it had been to them. As they were poor for the position, to which Nelson had raised them, the magnitude of the provision he had made for her and her child (a provision to be appraised at something like £25,000) may well have caused them to reflect, how much better it would have been for them, had their brother Horatio never fallen under the sway of Sir William Hamilton's wife. As Nelson was the maker of his own high fortune, he had of course a right to do what he liked with his wealth, and they had no right to murmur at his disposal of so large a proportion of it. But, as his provision for Lady Hamilton was so munificent, they were justified in thinking she should be grateful for it, and contented with it. When, instead of being satisfied with the hero's bountifulness to her, she spoke as though she were entitled not only to the £25,000, but to a goodly portion of the money which Parliament was about to vote for the suitable endowment of his family, the Nelsons certainly had cause to think her grasping and greedy. On learning that, in her fury at missing the hoped-for slice of the nation's provision for the Nelson family, she charged him with having withheld the codicil, for the purpose of putting into his pocket money which, had he acted fairly, would have passed to her pocket, the first Earl Nelson may well have thought her an *exceedingly* unreasonable woman.

On receiving the so-called codicil from the first Earl Nelson, Lady Hamilton caused it to be registered at Doctors' Commons. From the register of the Wills'-Office it passed quickly to the public papers. Lady Hamilton's claims to pecuniary recompense for her momentous services to her country having been thus put before the world, with a directness and universal publicity that had distinguished none of her previous solicitations for a pension, and at the same time in a form peculiarly qualified to commend them to general consideration, English society quickly formed itself in two parties, that for several years fought and wrangled with extravagant violence over the details of 'a case,' so nicely suited to dinner-table controversy. Just as it squabbled and stormed in later times over Caroline of Brunswick's grievances, the Byron scandals, the Gorham controversy, Governor Eyre's doings in Jamaica, and the Wapping butcher's right to the Tichborne baronetcy and estates, English society went into eloquent madness over Lady Hamilton's case. Whilst the lady had a party of 'friends,' who vowed to get her a pension in accordance with the dying Nelson's last prayer, she had a party of 'enemies' who deemed no noise excessive in showing reason, why England would forfeit her place as a Christian nation, if she pensioned the woman who had murdered Caracciolo, lapt blood in southern Italy, distributed poisonous sweetmeats in Neapolitan prisons, tarnished Nelson's glory, and been the shameless paramour of five successive keepers. The frantic nonsense talked over 'the case' did not, of course, proceed altogether from one party. If the 'enemies'

painted the lady far blacker than she was, and made far too much of her peccadilloes, the 'friends' were guilty of corresponding absurdities in their eagerness to prove that Emma Hamilton was an angel of light, and the supreme benefactress of her native land. Of course, also, the disputants of either party comprised many persons, who uttered their views on 'the case' with good sense and moderation. Whilst some of the 'enemies' were content to urge that to give a woman of Lady Hamilton's peculiar story a national pension would be a dangerous precedent, some of the 'friends,' avoiding the multifarious questions anent her merits and demerits, merely insisted that, remembering how much they owed him, the people of Great Britain should have complied with their great Admiral's dying request, even if it had been something far more extravagant than a prayer for pensions to a woman and child, in whom he was interested.

It was not from want of persuasive advocates and powerful friends, that Lady Hamilton failed to the last in her repeated solicitations for the pension, which surely might have been granted to her without any evil consequence to the country. George Rose did all he could for her in the matter, and Canning also favoured her cause after Pitt's death; and both these honourably-remembered statesmen would have continued to befriend her to the last, had she not said what was untrue of them in a petition which she addressed to the Prince Regent. In losing their countenance she was severely, though justly, punished for the failing, that makes it so difficult to say what reliance should be put on any statement she made in her later years,—a fail-

ing all the more remarkable, as in her earlier time she was incapable of any form of falsehood. That she missed the pension, for which she begged so importunately, may doubtless be attributed in some degree, to the violence of the rank-and-file of her 'friends' and her 'enemies.' As no pension they dared grant her would have satisfied the 'friends,' and any pension they could grant her would have infuriated the 'enemies,' ministers thought it best to do nothing for her, and to forbear to offend 'the powerful influence,' that had watched her whole course with disfavour. Of course she did not deserve the pension, which, had she obtained it when she first sued for it, or in the winter of 1805-6, when she doubtless felt the loss of Nelson's allowance, would have proved impotent to save her from financial ruin, after the passion for throwing away money had taken possession of her. What could an additional £500 a-year have done for the permanent comfort of the woman, who had in so few years wasted to a trifle the ample income left to her by her husband, and the handsome provision Nelson made for her. Her services to England were her services to Maria Caroline, who paid her for them with queenly munificence—with social recognition, place at court, her royal friendship and kisses, with diamonds and coach-loads of dresses. She had no more to do with the battle of St. Vincent, than she had to do with the battle of Solebay. The King of Spain's letter in cypher, a copy of which she transmitted to our Foreign Minister after *extorting it* from Maria Caroline, was a letter given to her freely by the Queen of the Two Sicilies, who had already furnished Sir William

Hamilton with the key to the cypher. Had she never been born, Nelson's ships would have watered and victualled just as readily at Syracuse. Her services to humanity, of which the clever Blackwood essayist wrote so strenuously, were as fictitious as her alleged services to England. She no more saved Maria Caroline and Ferdinand from the guillotine, than she consigned Louis and Marie Antoinette to death. Her part in the flight from Naples to Palermo was only the part of an efficient court-lady, who did what her royal mistress told her. The services to humanity, for which she has been commended, are no less imaginary than the crimes against humanity, for which she has been condemned, by fanciful writers.

No wonder the 'cold-hearted Grenville,' (as she called him), received her prayer for a pension in a way that nettled her. He knew too well for her purpose what had been her real position at the Neapolitan court; and he answered her 'friends' frigidly, not because his heart was cold, but because his head was clear. It is ludicrous to say, or even suggest, that she deserved a pension. And yet one cannot help feeling that the pension ought to have been granted to her, since Nelson begged so solemnly with his dying breath that it should be given.

Lady Hamilton had already retired from Merton, and established herself at Richmond, when she wrote unavailingly, on the 4th of September, 1808, to the Duke of Queensberry, begging him to give her £15,000 for Nelson's villa, with its furniture. Something more than two months later (25th of November, 1808), when some of her wealthier well-wishers met at

the house of Alderman Sir John Perring, baronet, to confer on the state of her affairs, and see what could be done to extricate her from her difficulties, the already-given statement of her debts and assets was laid before them. The result of the conference was that she assigned Merton Place and her effects to Sir John Perring, Mr. Alexander Davison, Mr. Abraham Goldsmid, Mr. Richard Wilson, and Mr. Germain Lavie, in trust, with power to sell them at their discretion, for the satisfaction of her creditors and the re-adjustment of her affairs. At the same time, six of the gentlemen at the meeting (Mr. Davison, Mr. Goldsmid, Sir Robert Barclay, Mr. John Gooch, Mr. Wilson, and Sir John Perring) subscribed £3,200 for her immediate relief.

Between the date of this arrangement with 'her friends' and the date of her afore-mentioned letter to the Duke of Queensberry, Lady Hamilton dated at Richmond, on the 16th of October, 1808, the later of the two destroyed wills, to which several references have been made in foregoing pages. The will, made at Richmond, is chiefly noteworthy for these opening sentences: 'If I can be buried in St. Paul's, I should be very happy to be near the glorious Nelson, whom I loved and admired; and as once Sir William, Nelson, and myself had agreed we should all be buried near each other, if the King had [not] granted him a public funeral, this would have been, that three persons who were so much attached to each other from virtue and friendship, should have been laid in one grave, when they quitted this ill-natured, slanderous world. 'But 'tis past, and in Heaven, I

hope, we shall meet. If I am not permitted to be buried in St. Paul's, let me be put where I shall be near my dear mother, when she is called from this ungrateful world.' That she could think herself morally entitled not only to interment in St. Paul's Cathedral, but to a place in Nelson's tomb, shows what a wildly unreasonable woman Emma Hamilton became in her closing years.

Having deteriorated steadily from the date of her return to England, the prematurely waning Beauty, henceforth till her death in a foreign land, deteriorated quickly in figure, complexion, style, tact, tone. Her day was over; but there still remained years for her to pass, under growing troubles and humiliations. In the year following her withdrawal from Merton, she lost her nephew and former protector, Mr. Charles Greville, on whose death, without known issue, Colonel Robert Fulke Greville (whilom Equerry to George III., and Gentleman Usher of Honour [for the one day] in attendance upon the Prince of Wales at the celebration of His Royal Highness's unfortunate marriage with Caroline of Brunswick, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's) succeeded to his Uncle Hamilton's Pembrokeshire estate, and was responsible for the payment of Lady Hamilton's annuity of £800. That this annuity was paid punctually to Lady Hamilton for some time subsequent to Mr. Charles Greville's death, appears from a noteworthy letter, that will soon be submitted to the reader.

I am unable to state precisely how long Lady Hamilton lived at Richmond after leaving Merton; but she certainly had her home at Richmond on the

12th of December, 1809, when she wrote this note to Messrs. Cadell and Davis, the publishers:

'Lady Hamilton presents her compliments to Messrs. Cadell and Davis, and will be much obliged to them, if they will send her a copy of the Life of the glorious, good, and great Nelson by the bearer, and allso the price, as she does not know what the expense of the work is, and she will remit the money emediatly.'

At the foot of this note appears the publishers' memorandum, 'Resides at Richmond.' It is probable that she moved from Richmond into Bond Street lodgings in the spring of the year 1810, but she may have remained at the rural town to a later date. Anyhow, on leaving Richmond, she lived for a while with Horatia in lodgings at 150, Bond Street, where she was residing on the 4th of September, 1811, when she made this curious and characteristic will, which was registered at Doctors' Commons after her death:

'September the fourth 1811.

'I Emma Hamilton of No. 150 Bond Street London Widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton formerly Minister at the Court of Naples being in sound mind and body do give to my dearly beloved Horatia Nelson daur of the great and glorious Nelson all that I shall be possessed of at my death money jewells pictures wine furniture books wearing apparel silver gold-plated or silver-gilt utensils of every sort I may have in my house or houses or of any other persons' houses at my death any marbles bronzes busts plaster of Paris or in short every thing that belonged to me I give to my best beloved Horatia Nelson all my table linen laces ornaments in short everything that I have I give to her any money either in the house or at my bankers all debts that may be owing to me I beg that she may have I give to Horatia Nelson all silver with inscription with Viscount Nelson's name on or

his arms I give to her wou'd to God it was more for her sake I do appoint George Macham Esqre of Ashford Lodge in the County of Sussex and the Right Honble George Rose of Old Palace Yard Westminster my Ex^ors^ and I leave them Guardians to my dear Horatia Nelson and I do most earnestly entreat of them to be the Protectors and Guardians and be Fathers to the Dau^r^ of the great and glorious Nelson and it is my wish that H.R. Highness the Prince Regent or if before my death he shall become King that he will provide for the said Horatia in such a manner that she may live as becomes the dau^r^ of such a man as her victorious Father was and as His Royal Highness often promised me that he wou'd have me remunerated when he had it in his power for the services that I have rendered to my King and Country and as I have never been remunerated nor ever received one sixpence from Government let me on my knees beg of His Royal Highness to provide for the said Horatia Nelson the only child of the Great and Glorious Nelson and I beg after my death that a copy of this my last will and testament may be sent to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent or if he is King it may be sent to His Majesty for His high worth honor and probaty and the friendship which he had for Nelson will induce him to protect his child for me H.R.H^s^ always shewed me the greatest kindness and for the sake of Sir William Hamilton whom His R. Highness so highly honoured that he will provide for the orphan Horatia when my head is laid low she will want protection therefore to God Almighty to His R. Highness and to my Ex^ors^ do I most earnestly recommend her on my knees blessing her and praying for her that she may be happy virtuous good and amiable and that she may remember all the kind instructions and good advice I have given her and may she be what her great and immortal Father wished her to be brought up with virtue honor religion and rectitude Amen Amen Amen I do hereby annull all wills made by me formerly and I beg that this may be considered as my last will and testament written with my own hand this September the fourth 1811, Emma Hamilton.—If I shall have any money in the Funds or landed property at my death I give to the said Horatia Nelson all and every-

thing belonging to me and if she shall dye before she shall be able to make her will I give all that I have bequeathed her to the daurs of Mr. John and Amy Moore my late Aunt and Uncle and now living in Moore Street Liverpool and I pray to God to bless them but I hope my dear Horatia will live to happy and marry well and I hope that she will make her will as soon as I am dead for I do absolutely give her all I have I still hope Mr. Macham and Mr. Rose will see to the educating of Horatia and that she may live with Mrs. Macham's family till she is disposed to some worthy man in marriage I forgot to mention that I also give Horatia all my china glass crockery ware of every sort that I have——

EMMA HAMILTON. (L.S.)

Signed sealed published and declared by Emma Lady Hamilton as her last will and testament in the presence of Thomas Coxe A.M.—William Haslewood of Fitz Roy Square, Middlesex.

The registration of this curious essay in rigmarole is followed, in the Wills' Office register by a memorandum, that (George Macham esq. and the Right Honourable George Rose having disregarded the court's citations for them to accept or refuse probate and execution of the will, and Horatia Nelson, a minor, having in like manner disregarded the court's citation for her to accept or refuse letters of administration with the said will annexed) administration (with the will annexed) of the goods etc. of Dame Emma Hamilton late of Calais in France was granted on the 6th of March, 1816, 'to William Tabor of Carnaby Market in the county of Middlesex gentleman, as a person named by and on the part and behalf of John Smith and George Goodwin gentlemen, limited to the purpose only to attend supply substantiate and confirm the proceedings which have already been had or which shall or may hereafter be had in certain causes or suits commenced or intended to be commenced in the

High Court of Chancery or any other causes or suits which may hereafter be commenced between the said parties or any parties touching and concerning the premises etc.,'—words pointing with sufficient directness to the litigation that resulted from Lady Hamilton's financial embarrassments, both before and after her death.

A noteworthy feature of the will is Lady Hamilton's steady forbearance to speak of Horatia as her offspring, whilst repeatedly declaring her to be Nelson's daughter. Lady Hamilton was persistent in denying that she was the mother of the child, to whom she gave birth (probably at 23 Piccadilly), under already stated circumstances. In his edition of Nelson's 'Dispatches and Letters' (*vide* vol. vii. pp. 369, 389) Sir Harris Nicolas declared himself to have the authority of Mr. Haslewood, for stating in the most positive manner that Lady Hamilton was not Horatia's mother. According to Sir Harris Nicolas, Mr. Haslewood could have told who was the child's mother, had not an obligation of honour constrained him to keep the name secret. What authority Mr. Haslewood had for speaking to this effect of Horatia's parentage does not appear. He was, no doubt, one of Nelson's confidential friends, and on divers matters one of his professional advisers; but it is not conceivable that Nelson was in any degree the cause of his friend's egregious error respecting the child, on whose birth Nelson congratulated Lady Hamilton as the birth of their child, saying, 'I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one, and you, thank my God, never gave one to anyone else.' It may be assumed con-

fidently that Mr. Haslewood's misconception resulted from statements made to him by Lady Hamilton, who made and left behind her in writing this shameful piece of false testimony respecting her own child's maternal parentage :—'She is,' Lady Hamilton wrote in a paper, that was submitted to Sir Harris Nicolas, 'the daughter, the true and beloved daughter of Viscount Nelson, and if he had lived, she would have been all that his love and fortune could have made her ; for nature has made her perfect, beautiful, good and amiable. Her mother was TOO GREAT TO BE MENTIONED, but her father, mother, and Horatia had a true and virtuous friend in EMMA HAMILTON.' It was thus, whilst cautiously forbearing to mention Maria Caroline by name, Lady Hamilton had the unutterable baseness to declare her own illegitimate child to be the illegitimate offspring of the Queen, who had distinguished her with caresses, loaded her with favours, and rewarded her services with royal munificence.

It is not surprising that Lady Hamilton denied, and persisted in denying, that she was the mother of the illegitimate child to whom she gave clandestine birth, whilst living with her husband. On the contrary, it would have been passing strange, had she confessed to her acquaintance a truth so discreditable to her as a wife, and so certain, were it divulged, to deprive her of the sympathy of the most respectable supporters of her claims to the nation's consideration. For her denial of a fact she was under no obligation to publish to her own discredit, for the *negative* untruth respecting a matter about which no one had a right

to question her, no generous censor will throw hard words at the adventuress. Nor is there any need to judge her severely for the many exaggerations and the several wholly baseless statements, with which she garnished her story of her services to, and sacrifices of property for, the honour of her country. In respect to a large proportion of these last-named inaccuracies, it may indeed be fairly urged that she was not so much the utterer of wilful untruths, as the mere victim of her own delusive fancy. But her *positive* untruth to Maria Caroline's infamy admits of no apology. It lives and must ever live in personal story as about the vilest lie ever told by one woman of another woman.

Maria Caroline was no angel. She has no strong title to admiration and sympathy, albeit she has some weak claims to both. But, having regard to Emma Hamilton's vile and poisonous lie about her, most readers of this page will find themselves so far on the slandered Queen's side, as to rejoice that, when Nelson entreated her to use her influence with the court of St. James's in support of Emma Hamilton's claim for a pension, she disappointed and nettled him by the coldness with which she replied to his prayer, and the reluctance she displayed to do anything more for the woman whose services she had already requited lavishly. Had she shown alacrity and fervour in supporting the prayer for her pension, had she on hearing of Emma Hamilton's straitened circumstances sent her money or another gift of diamonds, her action would have been tortured by Lady Hamilton's partisans into evidence, that the Queen could not ven-

ture to disregard the appeal of the confidante, who was cognizant of Her Majesty's liaison with the English admiral, and was the custodian of its issue.

It was not in the nature of things for Lady Hamilton's creditors to allow her to rest at peace in any of the places she inhabited between her retirement from Merton and her flight to Calais. After leaving her lodgings in Bond Street, she found for a brief while an asylum at Fulham under the roof of her friend, Mrs. Billington the actress. Powerless to elude for any long period those of her creditors who were set on extreme measures against her, Lady Hamilton was arrested for debt and sent to the King's Bench prison in the summer of 1813. In saying that she was a prisoner for about ten months, her biographers seem to have been guilty of no exaggeration; but they were not justified in representing that she spent these months actually within the prison. If for a brief while she was held within the prison itself, she soon obtained permission to live at 12, Temple Place, within 'the rules' of the Bench, where she received her friends, and enjoyed a degree of liberty that rendered her detention far less galling and irksome than the lot of a prisoner within the walls.

She was thus lodging with Horatia at 12, Temple Place, within 'the rules,' when, on the last day of July, 1813, she wrote this characteristic note to Sir or Mr. Thomas Lewis,

'12 Temple Place: Saturday.

'My dear Sir Thomas, Will you come to-morrow to meet our good pope and Mr. Tegart. It is the first of Agust (*sic*), do come, it is a day to me glorious, for I largely contributed to its success, and at the same time it gives me pain

and grief, thinking on the Dear lamented Chief, who so bravely won the day, and if you come we will drink to his immortal memory. He cou'd never have thought that his Child and my self shou'd pass the anniversary of that victorious day were we shall pass it, but I shall be with a few sincere and valuable friends, all Hearts of Gold, not Pinchebacks, and that will be consoling to the afflicted heart of your faithful Friend,

'EMMA HAMILTON.'

The good pope, as she styles him with heavy playfulness, seems to have been the Abbé Campbell, who is said to have paid her frequent visits in the King's Bench 'rules.' Though the addressee of the invitation is styled 'Sir Thomas' in the note, he is styled 'esquire' in the superscription, 'Thomas Lewis, Esquire, Buckingham Street, Strand.' The note bears on the outside four postal stamp-marks and two written memoranda: (1) 'Two Pence Unpaid Circus,' showing that the writer omitted to prepay the letter; (2) 1 o'clock Jy 31, 1813, Nn.,' the day on which the letter was written and posted; (3) 2 o'clock 2 AU, 1813, Nn.; (4) 12 o'clock 3 AU, 1813, Nn.;' (5) the written memorandum, 'Not known in Buckingham Street, Strand—Jas. Welch,' showing that the postman, James Welch, could learn nothing about Sir or Mr. Thomas Lewis in Buckingham Street; and (6) the written memorandum, 'Gone away—W. Hayward,' showing that the postal officer, W. Hayward, certified that Sir or Mr. Thomas Lewis had gone away. Let it be added that in 1813 the anniversary of the battle fell on Sunday the 1st of August, whereas in 1812 it fell on Saturday 1st of August, and in 1814 fell on Monday 1st of August. The three

several postal brands put it beyond question that the letter was posted in July, 1813, and remained in the keeping of the post-office on at least the three following days. No letter was ever in England stamped on three several days with three several postal brands, each of which marked the wrong year. It is therefore certain that Lady Hamilton was living within the Bench prison 'rules' on the 31st of July, 1813, and was then preparing to crack a bottle with a few staunch friends at 12, Temple Place, on the morrow, in celebration of the victory of the Nile. It is well that this should be made clear to the reader.

I cannot speak precisely as to the dates of the beginning and ending of Lady Hamilton's term of detainment in the King's Bench 'rules.' After alluding to her residence in the Bond Street lodgings, Pettigrew says, 'She was, however, soon obliged to secrete herself from the pursuit of her creditors, but in 1813 she was imprisoned in the King's Bench. From this confinement, after ten months, she was liberated by the kind assistance of Mr. Alderman Joshua Jonathan Smith, a man of most upright conduct, and kind heart and disposition,' but he says nothing that points to the month in which her incarceration began. It is, however, certain, as she was at 12, Temple Place, on the last day of July, 1813, that several writers have erred in representing that her flight to Calais was made before the 4th of that month. For reasons that will be given in the next and last chapter of this memoir, it may be regarded as certain, that her flight to France was made in the spring or summer of 1814 instead of the

summer of 1813, and that her sojourn at Calais, where she died on the 15th of January, 1815, cannot have much exceeded six or seven months, and was shorter by about a year than some of her biographers represent.

Her liberation from prison seems to have been consequent on Alderman Smith's action in offering himself as her surety. The worthy alderman's intervention, however, was less beneficial than he hoped it would prove to her. The creditor, in respect to whose claim the alderman became her bail, was only one of several creditors who were pursuing her with just or fictitious claims. Apprehensive of reconsignment to gaol at the suit of a coach-builder, Lady Hamilton had not long regained her liberty, when she used it (with her surety's permission and assistance) to escape from England. Embarking one evening at the Tower with Horatia (by this time a bright, clever, well-grown girl in her 14th year) for her companion, she slipt down the river, and made a rough and tedious passage to the French port. From a letter she wrote to the Right Honourable George Rose on the 4th of July, 1814, after she had recovered from her sea-sickness, put Horatia to a day-school, and enjoyed the diversion of a 'fête-champêtre pour les bourgeois' that took place at two miles' distance from Calais, it is manifest that, if the evening of her embarcation at the Tower was not on an evening of June 1814, it was an evening of an earlier month.

CHAPTER XIV.

LAST MONTHS AT CALAIS.

From Tower Wharf to Calais Harbour—Lady Hamilton's Designs for her Life at Calais—Horatia at a Day-School—Date of Emma's Arrival at Calais—She Writes to the Hon. Robert Fulke Greville—Good Cheer and sound Bordeaux—The Hon. R. F. Greville declines to send Lady Hamilton a £100—His Attitude to his Uncle's Widow—Monsieur de Rheims, the English Interpreter—The Sieur Damy's House in the Rue Française—Lady Hamilton pawns her Trinkets and Plate—Failure of her Health—Her last Illness—Her Death and Funeral—Her honoured and dishonoured Grave—Announcements of her Death in the *Gazette de France* and *Morning Post*—Confirmation of the Announcements—Town-Talk about Emma—Mr. Cadogan and Earl Nelson at Calais—Absurd Slander on the Earl—Final Judgment on Lady Hamilton.

1814—1815 A.D.

THE letter Lady Hamilton wrote to Mr. Rose on 4th of July, 1814, when she had been at least some days in Calais, as it appears in the diary of the Right Honourable George Rose, with editorial emendations of the writer's spelling and an erroneous year date, runs thus,

'Hotel Dessin, Calais,
'July 4, 1813.

'We arrived here safe, dear sir, after three days' sickness at sea—as, for precaution, we embarked at the Tower, Mr. Smith got me the discharge from Lord Ellenborough. I then begged Mr. Smith to withdraw his bail, for I would have died in prison sooner than that good man should have suffered for me, and I managed so well with

Horatia alone, that I was at Calais before any new writs could be issued out against me. I feel so much better from change of climate, food, air, large rooms, and *liberty*, that there is a chance I may live to see Horatia brought up. I am looking out for a lodging. I have an excellent Frenchwoman, who is good at everything; for Horatia and myself and my old dame, who is coming will be my establishment. Near me is an English lady, who has resided here for twenty-five years; who has a day-school, but not for eating and sleeping. At eight in the morning I take Horatia; fetch her at one; at three we dine; and then in the evening we walk. She learns everything; piano, harp, languages grammatically. She knows French and Italian well, but she will still improve. Not any girls but those of the first families go there. Last evening we walked two miles to a *fête-champêtre pour les bourgeois*. Everybody is pleased with Horatia. The General and his good old wife are very good to us; but our little world of happiness is in ourselves. If, my dear sir, Lord Sidmouth would do something for dear Horatia, so that I can be enabled to give her an education, and also for her dress, it would ease me, and make me very happy. Surely he owes this to Nelson. For God's sake do try for me, for you do not know how limited. I have left everything to be sold for the creditors who do not deserve anything; for I have been the victim of artful mercenary wretches, and my too great liberality and open heart has been the dupe of villains. To you, sir, I trust, for my dearest Horatia, to exert yourself for me, and that will be an easy passport for

Every reader must regard this epistle as having been penned after the writer had been a good many days, probably three or four weeks, possibly a couple of months in Calais. She has regained her spirits and bodily vigour, finds herself much better for the change of air and diet, is looking out for a desirable apartment into which to move from the hotel, has selected a school for her child and put her into it, is in the habit of taking her to the school at eight a.m.,

is satisfied with the progress the girl is making in her studies, and delighted by the good opinions people have of the darling. Such a letter cannot have been written within a week of the writer's arrival in Calais. The writer must have been two or three weeks in Calais, may have been there for two months.

Biography would have us believe that this letter was written on the 4th of July, 1813, by the woman who on the 31st of that month was calling her London friends together to crack a bottle on the morrow at 12, Temple Place, in celebration of the victory of the Nile. Clearly the editor of the statesman's 'Diary' is wrong by an entire year as to the date of the epistle. I have not seen the MS. of the epistle; but from my knowledge of Emma Hamilton's epistolary ways, and from my experience of editorial slips, I see how the error may be accounted for. She usually gave the day-date, but as often as not omitted the year-date, in the headings of her letters. The epistle in the original was, perhaps, dated 'July 4' without the year. Sir Harris Nicolas (*vide* 'Dispatches and Letters,' vol. vii, p. 395) gives 'the 6th of January, 1814,' as the date of Lady Hamilton's death. Settling the letter's date by Sir Harris's authoritative book, the editor of the Diary would think the epistle written in July, 1813.

There having been some curious misrepresentations of Lady Hamilton's way of living at Calais, and also of her pecuniary circumstances at the time of her coming there, readers will be thankful for some information on both points.

Hitherto, it has been the humour of biography (a

lying jade!) to represent that Lady Hamilton had utterly exhausted her pecuniary resources when she arrived at Calais; that, on coming to Calais with only a trifle in her pocket, she gladly accepted the shelter of a small house which Monsieur de Rheims (the English interpreter) charitably lent her; and that, after subsisting miserably on a few sous a-day, till the charitable Mrs. Hunter provided her with meat and wine, she died in extreme destitution. 'Mrs. Hunter,' says Dr. Pettigrew, 'was in the habit of ordering meat daily at a butcher's for a favourite little dog, and on one of these occasions was met by Monsieur de Rheims, who followed her exclaiming, "Ah! Madame! Ah! Madame! I know you to be good to the English; there is a lady here that would be glad of the worst bit of meat you provide for your dog!"' The result of this pathetic appeal, according to the biographer and his several followers, was that Mrs. Hunter bade Monsieur de Rheims provide Lady Hamilton with proper viands and wine. Biography did not quite go the length of averring that Lady Hamilton lived on dog's-meat. It was enough for the famous Beauty's personal historians to assert that she would have been glad of the flesh, bought for a favourite little dog. But from the fanciful exaggeration of the lady's 'want of pence' the notion has arisen, that Nelson's Lady Hamilton lived in her later time on scraps of meat, given her by the charitable Mrs. Hunter, then of Calais and afterwards of Brighton.

What are the facts of the case?

Though she had in a few years made 'ducks and drakes' of a provision, that might be called a 'fine

property' for a widow with only a single child on her hands, the state of Lady Hamilton's finances, when she arrived at Calais, was not so desperate as biographical romance has declared it. Kindly and free-handed Alderman Smith did not press her hand for the last time without having first put a purse of gold into it. She still had for her own and her child's maintenance the yearly interest (£200 *per annum*) of the £4,000 settled on Horatia. Though she had pledged a considerable proportion (perhaps, three-fourths) of her Hamilton pension to annuitants, she was still entitled to some of it. Moreover, by one of the twenty-five incomplete codicils to the will he left behind him at his death in 1810, that not wholly graceless old scamp, the Duke of Queensberry, had left her an annuity of £500 for her life, to console her for the failure of her attempts to extort a pension of that amount from the country. It is true that the Chancery lawyers were wrangling over the Duke's incomplete codicils; but the opinion that the legacies would be paid was so prevalent, as to give them a marketable value. Consequently, Emma Hamilton's resources were not utterly exhausted when she came to Calais, some seven or eight months before her death. As life and prices went at Calais in the earlier decades of the present century, the £200 a-year from the money *

* That Lady Hamilton used the interest of this money at Calais for her own necessities, as well as for her child's maintenance and education, we know from Horatia herself, who (*vide* Sir H. Nicolas's 'Despatches and Letters of Lord Nelson,' vol. vii, pp. 395, 396) wrote in later time, 'With all Lady Hamilton's faults—and she had *many*—she had many fine qualities, which, had she been placed early in better hands, and in different circumstances, would have made her a very superior woman. It is

settled on Horatia was enough for the child's maintenance and education, and also for her mother's sustenance in the ways of gentility.

It does not appear whether Emma Hamilton established herself in an apartment in Calais with her French maid, her 'old dame' and Horatia, in accordance with the purpose she communicated to the Right Honourable George Rose. If she occupied at any time a house belonging to Monsieur de Rheims, she can have occupied it for only a few weeks. But dates dispose me to regard Monsieur de Rheims's 'small house' as having existed only in Mrs. Hunter's fancy. Probably Lady Hamilton lived *en pension* at the best hotel of Calais (Dessein's), until she moved into the lodgings in a farm-house two miles distant from Calais, which she was occupying in September, 1814, when she wrote the following letter to her nephew, the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville:

'Common of St. Piere, 2 miles from Calais.
'Direct to me, chez Desin, Sep^tr 21, [1814.]

'Sir,—You know that my jointure of eightt hundred pounds a year has been now for a long time accumulating. If I was to die I should and have left that money a way, for the anuitants have no right to have it, nor can they claim it, for I was most dreadfully imposed on for my good nature, in being bail for a person whom I thought honourable. When I came a way I came with honor, as Mr. Alderman Smith can inform you, but mine own inno-

but justice on my part to say that through *all her* difficulties she *invariably* till the last few months expended on my education, &c., the whole of the interest of the sum left me by Lord Nelson, and which was left entirely at her control.' 'The last few months' of this passage, cover the months spent at Calais, and may perhaps cover some of the time Lady Hamilton and Horatia passed within the 'rules' of the King's Bench prison.

cence keeps me up, and I despise all false publications and aspersions. I have given every thing up to pay just debts, but anuitants I never will. Now, sir, let me intreat you to send me a hundred pound, for I understand you have the money. I live very quiet in a farm house, and my health is now quite established. Let me, Sir, beg this favour to

'Your humble servant,

'E. HAMILTON.'

'P.S.—Sir Wm Scott writes me there is some hopes to my irresistible claims. Such are his words.

'The best meat here five pence a pound, 2 quarts of new milk 2 pence, fowls 13 pence a couple, ducks the same. We bought two fine turkys for four shillins, an excellent turbot for half-a-crown fresh from the sea, partriges five pence the couple, good Bordeux wine white and red for fiveteen pence the bottle, but there are some for ten sous halpeny. Lord Cathcart past thro 3 days ago. Horatia improves in person & education every day. She speaks french like a french girl, italian, german, english, &c.'

Receiving this letter at his house, Great Cumberland Street, Oxford Street, on the 26th of September, the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville answered it on the following day.

For some time after it devolved on him to pay Lady Hamilton's annuity, the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville had made the payments with precise punctuality, when he received a letter from certain lawyers informing him, that Lady Hamilton had assigned 'the greater part' of the £800 a-year to one of their clients, for moneys paid by him to her. Under these circumstances the lawyers warned the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville to discontinue paying to Lady Hamilton the proportion of the annuity she had sold to their client. On receiving this notice, Sir William Hamilton's nephew assumed

he should soon hear from Lady Hamilton about what he deemed to be a mysterious business; but she sent him no letter in accordance with this reasonable anticipation. Her silence determined him to hold the annuity with a firm hand, and pay her no part of it, till she explained to him how matters stood; and in this resolve he was confirmed by his own legal advisers. Thus the affair remained, without any correspondence between the owner of the Welsh estate and Lady Hamilton, till on the 21st of September, 1814, she wrote to him asking him for a hundred pounds of the moneys, that had accumulated in his hands. The application was unsuccessful. Instead of getting a remittance from Great Cumberland Street, Lady Hamilton only received a notification of her nephew's resolve to pay her no more money, till he was assured by competent advisers that he should be perfectly secure from loss in doing so. This disappointing announcement of her nephew's attitude and temper may be assumed to have come to Lady Hamilton at the end of September or on an early day of October, 1814.

Remaining at the farm-house till the shortening days grew colder, Lady Hamilton returned to Calais on the approach of winter and became the tenant of the little house in the Rue Française where she died a few weeks' later. Dr. Pettigrew says, on the authority of Mrs. Hunter, 'When Lady Hamilton fled to Calais, Monsieur de Rheims gave to her one of his small houses to live in,'—a statement that implies something more than that Monsieur de Rheims accepted her for his tenant, and, instead of requiring

the first rent to be paid in advance, consented to wait for it till she received money from England. But the little house in the Rue Française did not belong to Monsieur de Rheims. The records of the Municipality of Calais show that it belonged to the Sieur Damy, when Emma Hamilton lived and died in it. Mrs. Hunter's memory or fancy must have betrayed her on divers points when, long after 1814, she spoke to Dr. Pettigrew of the circumstances under which she made Lady Hamilton's acquaintance. It is improbable that Mrs. Hunter, who was living in retreat at Calais and there superintending her boy's education, discovered Lady Hamilton's name and made her acquaintance only a few days before her death. In so small a place as Calais, where she lived openly for several weeks at Dessein's Hotel and was daily receiving letters, addressed to her under her own notorious name, Lady Hamilton must surely have been known by sight and name to every coterie and individual of the English colony of so small a town. That she was on terms of intimacy with several of the Calaisians is certain.

The dog's-meat story is a thing to be laughed over, *not* believed. Such meat was no food for the lady who, at the farm-house, lived on turbot and turkey, fricasseed chickens and roast ducks, partridges and omelets, washed down with good Bordeaux wine. There is, however, no room for doubt that, on returning from the farm to Calais at the approach of winter, without the hundred pounds she hoped to get from her nephew Robert Fulke Greville, Emma Hamilton suffered from the eternal want of pence, that has troubled so

many charming people. To raise a sufficient fund of pocket-money, with which to tide over the weeks that lay between her present needs and the next remittance of the £200 a-year from Horatia's money, she was compelled to pawn some of the few trinkets and small pieces of plate, which she had brought with her from England. But to her last hour the fallen Beauty, who could have raised money on what remained to her of her Hamilton annuity, and on what there was reason to think she would get from the Duke of Queensberry's estate, and who still had friends like Alderman Smith and Alexander Davison to help her at a pinch, never suffered at Calais from the extreme indigence in which she is generally imagined to have perished.

That she died at the comparatively early age of fifty-one is not surprising. From the outset of her Neapolitan career, her habits were unfavourable to her chances of longevity. Delighting in the pleasures of the table, she had been an epicurean *gourmande* for a quarter-of-a-century, and, without doing anything to justify the worst stories of her intemperance, had taken the champagne she 'loved' with a freedom, for which she had now for some time been paying the customary penalties. In the case of a man one would not hesitate to apply the term 'hard living' to the kind of self-indulgence that had for years incapacitated Lady Hamilton for invigorating bodily exercise, and made her, in various ways, much older than her years. A long succession of keenly-worrying excitements, closing with ten months of imprisonment in the purlieu of an unwholesome gaol, had wrought

her constitution irreparable injury, before she started from the Thames on a voyage, that was scarcely less stormy than her flight from Naples to Palermo. That the poor woman, who had of late shown a disposition to dropsy, died in a few days of a chill that nipped her liver and clogged her lungs, was only what might have been anticipated. But to the last Emma Hamilton had so riant a smile, and so hearty a voice, and a presence so delusively significant of physical energy, that Londoners read with astonishment the paragraph of the *Morning Post*, which, so late as the 25th of January, 1815, announced that she had ceased to live.

Respecting her illness and funeral, I can add nothing to the scanty particulars which Pettigrew gathered long afterwards from Mrs. Hunter, who cannot be regarded as a strictly reliable authority, though there is no reason to suspect her of wilful inaccuracy in what she said to the biographer. The facts of her services to Emma Hamilton had been dressed and coloured by her fancy, when she spoke of them to the man of letters. It may, however, be believed that, on hearing of Emma's extreme illness from Monsieur de Rheims, she sent her needful offerings of food and wine; that, after thus providing for the invalid's necessities, she received expressions of gratitude from her lips; and that, when Lady Hamilton had breathed her last breath, she made the arrangements for the funeral of the fallen adventuress, who lived in her recollection as 'beautiful in death.' Placed in a cheap deal coffin, that, on its way from the Rue Française to the appointed grave, was covered by a pall, which Mrs. Hunter had

made somewhat after the English fashion out of a white curtain and a black silk petticoat, Emma Hamilton found her last home in ground just outside Calais,—a piece of the whilom Duchess of Kingston's garden, that had been consecrated for interments. There being just then no English Protestant clergyman discoverable in Calais, an Irish half-pay officer, at Mrs. Hunter's request, read the Anglican order for the burial of the dead over the plain deal coffin, that was a few minutes later covered with earth, in the presence of the few witnesses of a less pompous than pathetic ceremony.

The graveyard, in which the once lovely Emma was thus put away at small charges for the undertaker, soon lost its sacred character, and became a yard for the storage of timber. After it had been thus put to profane use, the graves ceased to be cared for, and, through want of pious attention, ere long passed from sight. Mrs. Hunter recalled how she had marked the spot of Emma's interment with a small piece of wood, bearing the words, 'Emma Hamilton. England's Friend.' Speedily removed by some person whom it offended, this modest memorial was no less speedily replaced by Mrs. Hunter with a similar piece of wood, that, like the former tablet, soon disappeared from the ground in which it had been planted. As an armed sentry gave her to understand that, if she repeated the offence, he might feel it his duty to put a bullet or a bayonet into her, Mrs. Hunter forbore to make a third attempt to mark Emma's resting-place. In later time, however, the mound over her coffin was

illustrated by a stone bearing a Latin inscription. But the stone endured for only a brief term. Pettigrew says that it existed, albeit with a mutilated inscription, so late as 1833. But when he visited the whilom cemetery in the August of that year, my friend John Doran failed to discover either the memorial or any sure indication of the tomb. 'The grave itself,' he says, 'was pointed out to us by a Calaisian, but its locality was only traditionary.'

The length of time that followed her death, on 15th January, 1815, before the event was known in England, is an example of the slowness with which the news of interesting occurrences occasionally travelled from the Continent to London in George the Third's time. Five days had elapsed since her last breath when the *Gazette de France* announced that the celebrated Emma, widow of Sir William Hamilton, had died at Calais, adding that her body would be carried across the water for burial in her native land. Five more days elapsed before the *Morning Post* of the 25th of January, 1815, took this piece of news from the *Gazette*, and offered it to English readers. The news stirred various people who were wholly indifferent to questions touching the lady's moral worth or worthlessness. The Honourable Robert Fulke Greville was eager for a confirmation of the report, which declared his Pembrokeshire estate to be freed from a charge of £800 a-year. To divers litigants in the Court of Chancery, to the lawyers of those litigants, and to the actuaries of certain offices in which Lady Hamilton's life had been insured, for the security of people who had lent her money, and

to the rank and file of her numerous creditors, the momentous question of the remaining days of January, was whether the news of her death was true or false. To ascertain the truth, the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville lost no time in writing to the *Préfet* of the *Département du Pas de Calais*, frankly owning that his interest in the matter was wholly of a pecuniary nature. When he had received the *Préfet's* answer, during the evening of the 31st of January, it was soon rumoured throughout the town that Romney's 'divine lady' had certainly passed away.

For a few weeks the gossip of the town turned much on the famous Beauty's death. By her 'enemies' it was told how she had perished miserably, whipped in her last hours by agonizing anticipations of eternal punishment, and by ghastly visions of the murdered Caracciolo.* Her futile screams for the divine forgiveness had disturbed her neighbours in the Rue Française, throughout the closing days and nights of her mortal torture. According to rumour, she had been a deep drunkard in her last years. It was alleged, as though it were a matter to her discredit, that the poor woman had embraced the Catholic faith at Naples, and used to receive the sacrament

* That this gossip had no foundation in fact, Sir Harris Nicolas was assured by a witness peculiarly qualified to speak on the matter. 'Upon the authority of a lady who lived many years with Lady Hamilton,' says Sir Harris (*vide* 'Despatches and Letters,' vol. iii, p. 522,) 'and who scarcely ever quitted her room during the last week of her life, it is now declared that Lady Hamilton's "screams" and "remorse" about Caracciolo existed only in the imagination of the writer who described them, as she was never known to have mentioned his name.'

in the King's Bench 'rules' from a Catholic priest (the Abbé Campbell), who visited her regularly for spiritual purposes throughout the months of her residence in Temple Place.

Whilst such things were said by her enemies, Lady Hamilton's 'friends' were loud in declaring that she had saved England from the French, had lived and died a staunch Protestant, and would not have left an unpaid bill behind her, had England only treated her according to her deserts.

On one point the 'friends' and 'enemies' told the same story. Lady Hamilton had died in extreme poverty. Indebted to the charity of strangers for the few comforts that alleviated the sufferings of her fatal illness, and for her almost beggarly interment, she had left behind her only a few francs (amounting to just twelve shillings of English money), a wardrobe and a few trifling effects that would be a poor equipment for a maid-servant, and a few duplicates of pawned plate and trinkets. That her possessions at Calais had indeed dwindled to a few articles, appraised at 228 francs, appears from an inventory of the effects, that was for some years, and probably still *is*, preserved at the bureau of the Juge de Paix.

Whilst the Hon. Robert Fulke Greville was awaiting the *Préfet's* answer to his request for sure information of the truth or error of the *Morning Post's* announcement, two Englishmen—Mr. Cadogan and the first Earl Nelson—were on their way to Calais. What occasioned Mr. Cadogan's strong interest in Lady Hamilton and her affairs does not appear. Anyhow, he hastened to Calais, and a few days later

returned to England with Horatia, whom he in due course committed to Mrs. Matcham, in accordance with a desire of the child's mother. As he was one of the trustees of Horatia's £4,000, and had moreover reason to think her his brother's daughter, Earl Nelson only did his duty in crossing the channel to provide for her safe passage to England. In journeying to Calais he may also have been actuated by a wish to ascertain whether Lady Hamilton had left behind her any papers, whose existence should be known to the head of the Nelson family. That Pettigrew was justified in recording that the Earl's purpose in hurrying to Calais was 'to demand' and get possession of Lady Hamilton's effects, no discreet reader is at the present date likely to believe. 'He wished,' Pettigrew says of the Earl, 'to take away the pledged trinkets and plate without payment.' Going beyond the words of his authority, Doran says, that Earl Nelson, '*in his cupidity*, wished to take the pledged trinkets without paying the necessary expenses for getting them out of pawn.' Though no one is likely to commend him for virtue or extraordinary intelligence, Nelson's clerical brother was neither a sheer simpleton nor a thief. He must have been both if he hoped to recover the pawned trinkets from the *Mont de Piété* without redeeming them with money, and from sheer cupidity tried to get possession of articles of property, to which he had no shadow of a lawful title. Mr. Cadogan may have set this wild story going. But it is more probable that Mrs. Hunter was the originator of the slander,

that may be said to be disproved by its grotesque extravagance.

So ends the story of a singularly charming, and for a brief season singularly successful adventuress, of whom it may be recorded in strict and cold justice,—that she started in her far from edifying career with some noble moral endowments, which she retained for many years under circumstances peculiarly unfavourable to feminine goodness; that the evil things she did were trivial in comparison with some of the offences of which history has falsely accused her; that for her evil behaviour she is less blameworthy than the men who determined her course in the earlier passages of her womanly years; that she was upon the whole far more sinned against than sinning. As she won for herself a place amongst historic womankind from which she cannot be pushed, and, for good or ill, is an imperishable feature of England's story, it is well for readers to know precisely what manner of woman she was. England is to be acquitted of treating her with cruel ingratitude. The woman is to be acquitted of crimes and vices which, had she been guilty of them, would have placed her outside the pale of Christian sympathy and even of human toleration. A devoted mother to the last and youngest of the children she might not own, she was herself an exemplary daughter. At every turn of her journey through life she was compassionate and free-handed to the poor. In judging her, men should remember that, in these respects in which she was most faulty, she was what masculine selfishness

made her. Ere they condemn her for her manifold weaknesses and wanderings, women of gentle birth and nurture should pause and ask themselves what they might have done and become, had they been born in the cabins of the poor, been constrained in childhood to live and work with domestic servants, and then been tempted by indigence, beauty, and flattery, as Emma Hamilton was tempted at the threshold of her womanly time.

APPENDIX.

A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER ON CERTAIN PASSAGES OF THE INTRODUCTION TO MR. JOHN KNOX LAUGHTON'S 'LETTERS AND DESPATCHES OF HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON, K.B.'

IN this Memoir of Lady Hamilton, I have made the smallest possible use of the well-known and far from uniformly reliable 'Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton; 2 vols. (1814),' and in no single case have relied on any passage of those letters, whose authenticity appears questionable. In dealing with Lady Hamilton's career from the date of her return to England in 1800 to the date of Nelson's death, I have avoided several matters about which we have no other information, than what has come to us from the least reliable documents of the reasonably suspected collection. It seemed to me that, in respect to these not important matters, it would be better for my book to be incomplete from excess of caution, than inaccurate from misplaced confidence in dubious records.

Having fully satisfied myself, by a most careful examination of the conflicting evidences and arguments, that Dr. Pettigrew was right on the main issue, I have given my account of Horatia's birth and parentage, without troubling my readers with all the details of what may be called the Nicolas-Pettigrew controversy. But in the introduction to his excellent abridgment of Nelson's 'Letters and Despatches,' Mr. John Knox Laughton M.A., the eminent Professor of Modern History at King's College (London) and Lecturer on Naval History at Greenwich College, deals with certain points of the old controversy in a way, that has determined me to set forth my reasons for differing on those

points from so considerable a man of letters, and also my reasons for thinking him scarcely justified in calling the 'Fountain of Arethusa' letter a 'palpable forgery.'

I. *Mr. Laughton's Remarks on Questions touching Horatia's Parentage.*

Speaking of Nelson's regard for Sir William Hamilton's wife, Mr. Laughton says,

'But concerning the nature of that attachment it is quite impossible to decide. Those will speak the most positively who have least examined it. That Nelson was passionately devoted to Lady Hamilton is certain; but whether the devotion took the form of adultery may be doubted; and whether Horatia was the child of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, or of either of them, is a question that cannot be categorically answered. It may however be pointed out that though Horatia was born in January 1801, a feminine critic, so keen and out-spoken as Mrs. St. George, saw no trace of an approaching confinement in Lady Hamilton's figure, in October 1800; and that Lady Hamilton, during her stay in Dresden, not only gave repeated representations of her celebrated attitudes, but danced the Tarantola, and went through a great deal more exertion than a woman in her supposed condition would be likely to undertake. It may further be noted that Horatia's eyes are spoken of as "sloes,"* whilst Nelson's were grey, and Lady Hamilton's light blue; that Nelson never spoke of the child except as his "adopted daughter," and that Lady Hamilton positively denied being the mother. One letter indeed, given by Pettigrew (vol. ii, p. 652), would be conclusive, if its authenticity were established; but Pettigrew, in quoting it, has given no details of the letter itself; and its matter is too strange, too widely different from anything else either Nelson or Lady Hamilton ever wrote, to permit its acceptance without a close scrutiny. At present it rests merely on Pettigrew's statement; and Pettigrew was far from an exacting critic.'

Respecting the several expressions of opinion, in the first four sentences of the fore-going extract, I would only say, that long, careful, and repeated examinations of all the evidences touching the points have made me certain on all the questions, about which Mr. Laughton is so doubtful, and also dispose me to think that few critical persons, who trouble themselves to study and weigh the evidence, will in the end hesitate to answer the questions positively. It is something in favour of my judgment, that after examining the evidences *pro* and *con*, Mr. Laughton admits he is not in a position to deny that 'Horatia was the child of Nelson and Lady Hamilton.' For the establishment of the paternity of

* Egerton MS. 1623, f. 85.

a natural child, all that can be fairly required of a personal historian, is to show that a man strongly and unwaveringly believed himself to be the child's father, that the man was morally and mentally competent to form a sound judgment on the matter, and that his strong belief accords with all the known circumstances. The evidence that Nelson believed himself to be Horatia's father is conclusive. The delight her existence occasioned him, the great pleasure he took in playing with her when she was still in her first year, the tenderness he lavished upon her from the time of her own birth to the hour of his death, the pains he was at to provide for her education and maintenance both during his life and after his death, and the earnest words with which, in two letters of unquestionable authenticity, he assured her that he was her father, are sufficient evidence of his belief that she was his own child,—the belief which, in the total absence of evidence that it was a mere delusion, must be accepted as a reasonable and true view of the Admiral's relationship to the object of his strongest affections. Quoting a familiar proverb, the cynic may of course smile superciliously, shrug his shoulders, and hint that after all the belief may have been a delusion, that Nelson may have been in this affair the sport of his own fancy, and of Lady Hamilton's, or some other woman's, artifice. The cynic may, also, sneer in precisely the same way at any evidence of any parentage. The fact remains that Nelson believed himself to be Horatia's father, and that, in the absence of proof that he was a madman, the belief must be assumed to have accorded with certain previous incidents of his own personal story.

It is worthy of remark that, in holding it to be doubtful whether Horatia was really Nelson's child, Mr. Laughton differs wholly from Sir Harris Nicolas, who was never troubled by a moment's doubt as to Horatia's paternity. Whilst arguing that she was not Lady Hamilton's child, Sir Harris Nicolas had no hesitation in declaring her the daughter of Nelson, who (to use Sir Harris's words), 'during a long separation from his wife on the Public Service, so far yielded to temptation as to become the father of a child.' Elsewhere, in his critical examination of the evidences of Horatia's parentage, Sir Harris Nicolas remarks, 'That Lord Nelson believed himself to be the father

of this child is placed beyond dispute by his whole conduct towards her.' Declaring stoutly that Nelson believed himself her father, Sir Harris Nicolas declared no less strenuously his opinion that Nelson was Horatia's father. The thoroughness and emphasis with which Sir Harris spoke on these points, are evidence, to be considered by Mr. Laughton, that a man may answer questions touching Horatia's parentage 'most positively,' although he has examined them *most* thoroughly.

Mr. Laughton's inability to come to a positive conclusion on any of the points, certainly does not result from a disinclination to assign the fullest value to every consideration, making against the prevalent view of Horatia's parentage.

(1) 'It may however be pointed out,' says Mr. Laughton, 'that though Horatia was born in January, 1801, a feminine critic, so keen and outspoken as Mrs. St. George, saw no trace of an approaching confinement in Lady Hamilton's figure in October, 1800.' Mrs. St. George [Mrs. Trench] never set eyes on Lady Hamilton till 3rd October, 1800, and took her last view of her at Dresden on the 9th of that month. Horatia was born between the 29th and 31*st* (inclusive) of January, 1801. Let the earlier day be taken for the birthday. In that case, four full lunar months intervened between Mrs. Trench's last view of Lady Hamilton at Dresden and Horatia's birth in London. As Lady Hamilton had a tall and stout figure, that would not display obtrusively the 'trace' to which Mr. Laughton refers, it is conceivable Mrs. Trench had no suspicion of the interesting state of the Beauty's health. Mr. Laughton's words imply that the keen and outspoken lady put it on record, that she saw no such 'trace.' No such intimation appears in the lady's diary. But she does tell the readers of her diary one or two things which accord with the other evidence respecting Lady Hamilton's condition. She was so struck by Lady Hamilton's stoutness as to record in the diary, 'She is exceedingly embonpoint.' Yet further, the keen and outspoken critic of Lady Hamilton, says in her journal, 'Her waist is absolutely between' (? beneath) 'her shoulders.' Yet further, it is recorded in Mrs. Trench's diary that Lady Hamilton, whilst performing her attitudes, wore 'for her gown a simple calico chemise' (viz., a garment resembling

what is now-a-days called a tea-gown) 'very easy with loose sleeves to the wrist.' As Mrs. Trench observed that Lady Hamilton was exceedingly *embonpoint*, had the waist of her dress unusually near her shoulders, and whilst performing her 'attitudes' wore precisely the kind of tea-gown dress that would be most serviceable in veiling any suspicious *contours* of her 'exceeding stoutness,' it surely cannot be urged that the famous Beauty, who engaged Mrs. Trench's attention at Dresden, had an appearance inconsistent with the statement, that four full months later she gave birth to a child. Instead of being strengthened, Mr. Laughton's 'case' appears to me to be distinctly weakened by the testimony of his own witness.—By the way, there is evidence that, soon after Horatia's birth, a keen observer noticed in Lady Hamilton's appearance a change that, to adopt Mr. Laughton's convenient expression, may be called a distinct 'trace of a recent confinement.' As he had never seen her before, Mr. Alexander Davison, on making her acquaintance on some day subsequent to November 9th, 1800, may, like Mrs. Trench in the previous month, have regarded Lady Hamilton's exceeding stoutness unsuspiciously. But, on seeing her some six or seven days after Horatia's birth, he was so struck by her loss of flesh and increase of beauty, that on February 6th, 1801, he spoke of the change in her appearance to Nelson. Writing from sea to Lady Hamilton on February 7th, 1801 (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life,' vol. i, p. 651), Nelson says: 'Mr. Davison came whilst I was at dinner yesterday, and gave me your letter. He says you are grown thinner, but he thinks you look handsomer than ever.'—As for the exercise taken by Lady Hamilton four full months before her accouchement, the family doctors and matrons will, I am sure, decline to think it 'more exertion than' such 'a woman in her supposed condition would be likely to undertake.' To perform her 'attitudes,' a series of *tableaux-vivants*, it was not needful for Lady Hamilton to exert herself greatly. Mrs. Trench did not see the lady dance the Tarantola, and it does not appear that the Beauty danced it with excessive energy. All that Mrs. Trench says of the matter is, 'After I went, Mr. Elliot told me she acted Nina intolerably ill, and danced the Tarantola.' It should be observed that Lady Hamilton

had long been in the habit of dancing the Tarantola; and that to persons who are in the habit of dancing it, the dance is much less fatiguing than it is to those who dance it only once in a while. It is no unusual thing for an English gentlewoman to be whirling in the waltz round a London drawing-room within a few weeks, and playing a brilliant part at assemblies within a few days, of her accouchement. In the working-classes it is usual for enceinte women to persist in their ordinary toil almost up to the very hour of travail; and this ancient fashion of the poorer classes (to which Lady Hamilton belonged by birth) has rendered their women much more capable, than gently descended women, of taking strong bodily exercise up to the very moment of calling on Lucina. Moreover, as she was especially desirous of keeping her husband in ignorance of her condition, and could not have refrained from her usual exercises without making him inconveniently inquisitive and suspicious, Lady Hamilton had the strongest motive for dancing and performing her 'attitudes' as long as she could safely do so.

(2) The dark-eyed children of light-eyed parents are much commoner than Mr. Laughton seems to imagine. People so often misdescribe eyes, that no one ordinary witness could be sufficient to prove Horatia's eyes to have been 'sloes.' Had they been black as jet, she might all the same have been the offspring of light-eyed parents. Mr. Laughton would have done more, though not much, for his case by showing that Lady Hamilton's parents and Nelson's parents were all four light-eyed people. Again, if historical inferences are to be drawn from the colour of Lady Hamilton's eyes, those eyes should be described precisely. The nicely accurate Mrs. Trench says, 'Her eyes' were 'light blue, with a brown spot in one, which, though a defect, takes nothing away from her beauty or expression,'—a spot which may perhaps be regarded as an indication, that the blue-eyed Beauty had a strain of dark-eyed ancestry. Moreover, to raise a suspicion or even to prove that, instead of being Lady Hamilton's child by Nelson, Horatia was Lady Hamilton's child by some dark-eyed man, would not affect the greater part of the evidential value of Nelson's conviction that Horatia was his daughter. How came the conviction to hold his mind?

(3) 'Nelson,' says Mr. Laughton, 'never spoke of the child except as his "adopted daughter," and Lady Hamilton positively denied being the mother.' If it could be shown (it cannot be shown) that Nelson invariably spoke of Horatia as his 'adopted daughter,' the fact would be no evidence that she was not his natural daughter. On the contrary, it would rather be confirmatory evidence of her reputed blood-relationship to him. After being acknowledged and so taken by the male parent out of the legal class of 'no one's children,' a natural child is often styled 'an adopted child' in kindly social parlance, the term being regarded as a gentler and less disparaging description than a 'natural child.' Instead of weakening the general opinion that she was Nelson's own child, the fact of his describing her in the codicil as his 'adopted daughter' confirmed people in their belief, that she was his natural daughter, whom he had adopted by acknowledgment. Differing from Sir Harris Nicolas in holding it doubtful whether Horatia was Nelson's daughter, Mr. Laughton differs still more widely from him in thinking it doubtful, whether Nelson believed himself to be her father. It is puzzling that so able a man as Mr. Laughton should, at the present date, differ on the former point from Sir Harris Nicolas, and all the competent critics, who have studied with suspicious care all the evidences of Horatia's parentage. It is more perplexing that he should be doubtful on the second point, and have no better reason for the doubt than that in the codicil—the document which bequeathed Horatia to the beneficence of the country—and also in certain other documents Nelson described her by a term, no less appropriate to an illegitimate child who has been acknowledged by her father, than to a child adopted by persons not related to her in blood. In a writing designed for the public eye, Nelson could not with exact propriety have described her by any other term. Had he styled her his 'daughter,' without any qualifying word, he would to some people have seemed guilty of disrespect to his wife, and to a larger number of people would have appeared something less than precisely truthful. Had he spoken of her as his 'illegitimate child' or his 'natural child,' he would have done violence to his own tenderness for her, by putting on an historic record words,

that would cause her needless pain, should she peruse the writing on coming to years of discretion. Had he used either of those terms, he would have provoked from numerous worthy, though extremely narrow-minded persons, a charge of referring to his immorality with deficient delicacy and shameless candour. In calling her his 'adopted daughter,' he used the term most agreeable to his own paternal fondness,—the description least likely to offend and most calculated to conciliate social sentiment. The term misled no one. Every reader of the codicil apprehended the sense in which the two words were used. If Horatia was not his offspring, Nelson was guilty of a fantastic extravagance, when he solemnly required the country to provide for some unknown individual's child, for whom he had already made a good provision out of his own estate. He was guilty of something worse than fantastic extravagance, when he made this request—not for his own, but for some unknown man's infant—in terms which he knew would be construed by the whole country as an announcement that Horatia was his own offspring, born out of wedlock. If he styled her his 'adopted daughter' when speaking of her to the world, Nelson wrote to her, infant though she was, two remarkable letters, each of which appears to have been written in the hope that, on growing to be a woman, she would regard it as an assurance, that she was his offspring by blood as well as his child by adoption. In the letter, touching his provision for her education and maintenance, dated off Toulon, 21st October, 1803, he wrote to her, 'My dear child,—Receive this first letter from your most affectionate Father,' and in the closing words of the epistle said, 'and be assured that I am, my dear Horatia, your most affectionate Father—Nelson and Bronte.' Again, in the letter he wrote the little girl from the *Victory*, October 19th, 1805—so soon before his death—he begins by addressing her as his 'dearest angel,' and concludes the words with this solemn benediction: 'Receive, my dearest Horatia, the affectionate Paternal Blessing of your Father.—Nelson and Bronte.' Almost the last minutes he spent at Merton, before going forth to serve his country for the last time, were spent by Nelson in prayer at the bedside of the child. It possibly escaped Mr. Laughton's memory that Nelson used to call Horatia 'his own child' in the hearing of other

people. Speaking of the visits Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson paid Horatia at Titchfield Street, Mrs. Johnstone told Captain Ward, 'Lady Hamilton constantly visited her; Lord Nelson was frequently her companion in her visits to her, and often came alone, and played for hours with the infant on the floor, calling her his own child.'—As for Lady Hamilton's denials of being the child's mother, few readers will concur with Mr. Laughton in thinking they affect the evidence of Horatia's maternity, when they bear in mind Lady Hamilton's several strong motives for untruthfulness about the matter.

(4) Speaking of the testimony respecting Horatia's parentage, afforded by Dr. Pettigrew's book, Mr. Laughton says,

'One letter indeed, given by Pettigrew (vol. ii, p. 652) would be conclusive, if its authenticity were established; but Pettigrew, in quoting it, has given no details of the letter itself; and its matter is too strange, too widely different from anything else either Nelson or Lady Hamilton ever wrote, to permit its acceptance without a close scrutiny. At present it rests merely on Pettigrew's statement; and Pettigrew was far from an exacting critic.'

Pettigrew's documentary evidence touching Horatia's parentage does not consist of only *the one letter*, which, if genuine, is by itself conclusive, but comprises numerous letters, which without the one letter are sufficient for nice and exacting critics. Take away the epistle, which (if genuine) by itself settles the question, the other epistles of the Thompson-series of letters (if authentic) settle the question. Dr. Pettigrew does not produce the *one letter* until he has proved his case by the other letters. As he gives the exact date of the letter, indicates by asterisks the point where he omits a part of the composition, calls particular attention to words which he regards as referring to a piece of poetry, with which Nelson seems to have been familiar, and says that the letter was sent to Lady Hamilton by a private hand (whose name appears in the epistle), Dr. Pettigrew is scarcely to be charged with suspicious uncommunicativeness about the letter, which he prints, *after* having first proved his case by other documents. Instead of 'being strange and widely different from anything else either Nelson or Lady Hamilton ever wrote,' the one letter is congruent with the admissions touching Horatia's parentage, made by Nelson

inadvertently in his Thompson-letters to Lady Hamilton, and congruent with the substance of all the Thompson-letters, so far as they relate in any way to Horatia's parentage. It is congruent with everything Nelson is known to have written about the same subject, and is in every respect just such a letter as, from the general tenor of the previous Thompson-letters, Nelson might be expected to write to Lady Hamilton, as soon as he could write to her frankly and freely, without fearing a postal miscarriage or loss of the epistle in transit. No doubt, the letter is widely different from much that Lady Hamilton is known to have said and written. But (and this is a matter of much more importance) whilst congruent with all Nelson's action towards and for the infant, whom he believed to be his daughter, the letter accords in a very remarkable way with Lady Hamilton's known action towards and for Horatia, during the first year of the child's life. Doubtless, Pettigrew was no exacting critic, and no nice discerner of the peculiarities of literary style. But he was an honest and upright gentleman (Mr. Laughton does not suggest the doctor was less than honest), and whilst showing adequate knowledge of the manuscripts committed to his editorial discretion, he was unquestionably familiar with Nelson's handwriting. The channel, through which we receive the letter, entitles it to a larger measure of credit than needs be given to a letter, published in a book, bearing no such editor's name on the title-page, and containing documents of extremely questionable genuineness. A letter, congruent with all the authentic evidences respecting its subject, displaying no signs of fraudulent production, and submitted to students by a well-reputed man of letters, is not to be set aside, merely because the critic is not in a position to collate the printed transcript with the original document, as 'a Mr. So-and-So's mere statement,' and a 'writing of no established authenticity.' In denouncing the Arethusa-letter as 'a palpable forgery,' Mr. Laughton points to certain particulars of the letter in justification of his strong opinion, and in doing so he takes the usual and only proper course. Instead of merely setting *the* Thompson-letter aside, as a thing of no established authenticity and an editor's mere statement, he should have called attention to those particulars of the epistle, which he

deems to be evidential of forgery or dishonest manipulation. To his general statement that the letter is widely different from Nelson's other writings on the subject, I venture to oppose my carefully-formed opinion that the letter is congruent with all Nelson's known words about and action towards the child.

Though *the one* Thompson-letter (if genuine) is by itself conclusive proof of Horatia's parentage, and the other letters of the Thompson-series (if genuine) settle the question no less conclusively, there is no need of those curious writings to demonstrate that the girl, whom Nelson believed to be his own daughter, was Lady Hamilton's offspring.

(*a*) As Horatia was born between the 29th and 31st of January (inclusive), 1801, and Nelson (a sane man) believed her to be his daughter, he must in the spring of 1800 have enjoyed a degree of intimacy with some person of the gentler sex, sufficient to account for his firm belief that he was Horatia's father. In the spring of 1800, Nelson was on peculiarly intimate terms with Lady Hamilton, and had for more than a year and a half been so strongly possessed by admiration for and attachment to her, as to render it in the highest degree improbable that, since his expedition to Egypt, he formed with any other woman but Lady Hamilton a friendship, likely to result in Horatia. It was indeed suggested by Sir Harris Nicolas that the Admiral might perhaps have had a liaison, of which no one ever heard, with some woman other than Lady Hamilton in the Mediterranean, and that Horatia was the issue of the attachment. But the suggestion was a mere hypothesis, that may be pointed to as a good example of the way, in which a controversialist will sometimes give his own imagination such licence as he would declare in no degree permissible to his opponents. From September, 1798, to the spring of 1800, no officer of our Mediterranean Fleet ever heard of Nelson's name in association with any such mistress as Sir Harris Nicolas coldly imagined, in order to escape from the conclusion that Lady Hamilton was Horatia's mother. No one in the spring of 1800 had ever heard of any such intrigue as the one which Sir Harris Nicolas invented for his own controversial convenience, and offered to the world as a reasonable hypothesis some forty years after Nelson's death.

Fortunately the daring hypothesis may be dismissed with a smile; for to entertain it as a piece of possible history, the reader must take a very low view of Nelson. But though in 1800 rumour never associated him with any other enchantress than Lady Hamilton, his generous passion for that lady was an affair for gossip in every vessel under his command. The incident, that resulted in Horatia's birth, must have occurred at the time when Nelson was in the daily enjoyment of Lady Hamilton's society. The child's appearance in this world is clearly referable to what took place during the pleasure-trip to Malta. If the child whom Nelson believed to be his daughter was not Lady Hamilton's offspring, her mother must be sought for amongst the few other ladies with whom he associated during the trip. During the excursion three ladies were on board the *Foudroyant*, —Lady Hamilton, Miss Cornelia Knight, and a third English lady, whose name does not appear. Doubtless, both at Syracuse and at Malta, the Admiral and Sir William Hamilton chatted with other ladies. The thing to be observed is, that Nelson, who cannot be supposed to have cared much for any other woman during the trip, was the constant daily companion of Lady Hamilton at the time of the incident, that resulted in the birth of the child whom Nelson believed to be his daughter.

(*b*) After holding some intercourse with Lady Hamilton, under circumstances that gave her the best opportunities for scrutinizing the appearance and demeanour of the famous adventuress, and also for studying the indications of Nelson's regard for her, Lady Nelson—a gentlewoman not wanting in discernment and feminine instinct—determined to break with her husband rather than maintain a show of friendship for his enchantress.

(*c*) On calling upon Lady Hamilton some six or seven days after Horatia's birth, to receive the letter which he had undertaken to carry to Nelson, Mr. Alexander Davison remarked how much thinner she had become.

(*d*) Horatia made her appearance in this world just as Nelson was again at sea, and preparing for another great naval expedition. Had the child been, as Sir Harris Nicolas suggests, the offspring of Nelson and some woman other than Lady Hamilton, what course would he naturally

have taken when the child was thrown upon his hands? Nelson had in Mrs. William Nelson a sister-in-law, and in Mrs. Matcham and Mrs. Bolton two married sisters, who, in their gratitude to and affection for him, were ready to do everything in their power for his comfort. For all these three women he had the strongest affection and respect. Surely, then, he would have committed his illegitimate child to the care of one of these ladies of his own family, rather than to Lady Hamilton, to whom he could not commit the infant without risk of exposing her to serious scandal. Notwithstanding his high respect for her, she was the very last person on whom he would have put the work of providing nurses and a home for the child, and superintending the child's progress through infancy. Regard for her reputation, which needed his consideration all the more for being so battered, would have made him feel that, of all living women, she was the one whom it would be least fit for him to employ in so delicate a business, that would require her to be continually writing letters to him about the nursling. His sister-in-law or either of his sisters could have done the work for him quite as effectually, and without any risk of scandal. The task, so likely to expose her to fresh scandal, was imposed by Nelson on his friends' wife. Rather say, the task devolved upon her because she was the infant's mother.

(*e*) If Lady Hamilton had not been the child's mother, how would she naturally have acted, on receiving her commission to find a fit home and nurse for the child, and to superintend its nurture? Surely she would have done with openness what was required of her in a matter, not affecting her own honour. As there would in that case have been no need for secrecy, she would have spoken to Sir William Hamilton, when he and she would have taken measures for the execution of their friend's wishes, and taken them in a way consistent with decency and dignity,—the dignity of persons of condition, who were hoping to be soon admitted to the peerage of the realm. How did Lady Hamilton act? There is no need to repeat here in brief what has already been said at large. But it is well to show more precisely the unimpeachable character of the evidence respecting Lady Hamilton's way of putting Mrs. Thompson's

infant out to nurse. In 1828, when she had married an English clergyman (the Reverend Philip Ward) Horatia asked her husband's brother (Captain James Ward of the 81st Regiment) to call on Mrs. Johnstone (Nurse Gibson's surviving daughter), whom she remembered as 'a little deformed woman.' Mrs. Johnstone had recently written to Mrs. Ward, when the latter thus requested her brother-in-law to call on the worthy woman. The captain's mission was to gather all he could respecting his sister-in-law's parentage and infancy from Nurse Gibson's daughter. On making Mrs. Johnstone's acquaintance, Captain Ward formed a most favourable opinion of the woman, whose circumstances were so far prosperous as to preserve her from the suspicion of having been actuated by sordid motives in recalling herself to Mrs. Ward's recollection. The most important facts Captain Ward learnt from this respectable woman were, (1) That 'Lady Hamilton brought the child to Nurse Gibson's house in a hackney-coach one night in January or February;' (2) That on this nocturnal visit to Nurse Gibson's house, Lady Hamilton was 'unattended,' and did not give Nurse Gibson any information as to the child's parents; and (3) that Nurse Gibson declared the child was at that time 'no more than eight days old.' How are we to account for Lady Hamilton's behaviour? If she was not Horatia's mother, what need had she to bring the child thus clandestinely to the nurse's house—by night and unattended, when the infant was only eight days old? If she was Horatia's mother, one has not to seek for reasons why she smuggled the child from the place of birth to the nurse's house as soon as she could safely do so; why she came by night, and allowed no servant to accompany her.

(*f*) Here, surely, is a strong mass of evidence that the child was the offspring of Nelson and Lady Hamilton. In the spring of 1800 they had for a considerable period been strongly attached to one another; in that spring they were together in the Mediterranean, and in constant and daily companionship, when the incident occurred that caused Nelson nine months later to think himself Horatia's father; there is not a tittle of testimony that he was at this time attached to any other woman in the Mediterranean; on

seeing Lady Hamilton, feminine discernment and sensibility caused Lady Nelson to resent her husband's attempt to force so unsuitable an acquaintance upon her; Horatia's birth was followed by just such a change in Lady Hamilton's appearance as an accouchement might be expected to produce in a woman of her beauty and habit; within eight days of her birth in London, Horatia was taken secretly at night by the unattended Lady Hamilton, and hidden away in the nurse's house; from the hour of her birth Nelson cared for the child as his daughter; from the hour of her birth he confided the child to Lady Hamilton's care; from the moment of Sir William Hamilton's death to the moment of his own death, he cared for Lady Hamilton as though she were his child's mother. All these facts are proved without the aid of any one of the Thompson-papers, or of a single document of questionable authenticity. Historians are in a bad way if all this mass of evidence is aught less than strong enough (in the almost total absence of contrary evidence) for a proof of Horatia's parentage.—But the evidence is far stronger. All the attempts to show that Horatia was the child of some other woman than Lady Hamilton have failed wholly. Thomas Allen's story was broken to pieces. Sir Thomas Hardy's fanciful tale was utterly disproved by critical examination. Sir Harris Nicolas's suggestion was only offered as an hypothesis. He never affected to *know* of any woman but Lady Hamilton, to whom Nelson was attached in the spring of 1800. Lady Hamilton's monstrous statement to Maria Caroline's infamy was never supported by the faintest evidence, and was proved a mere slander, first by the coldness with which the Queen replied to Nelson's appeal on Lady Hamilton's behalf, and then by the testimony that the infant was only eight days old when brought to Nurse Gibson. Mr. Haslewood's sense of honour preserved him from making a definite declaration of Horatia's parentage on the maternal side.—A word about the documentary evidence. The Thompson-papers, which came to Mrs. W[illegible] through Mrs. Johnstone, show that at least as [illegible] of March, 1801, Lady Hamilton used t[illegible]son about Miss 'Thomson,' pretendin[illegible] child of a certain Mr. and Mrs. T[illegible] of this group of the Thompson-p[illegible]stioned;

and their evidence that Horatia was thus early spoken of as Miss Thomson by Lady Hamilton and Nurse Gibson, must at least dispose readers to think it probable that Lady Hamilton and Nelson wrote to one another from an earlier date about Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Thomson [*alias* Thompson]. As the editor of 'Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton, 2 vols., 1814,' does not appear to have had any knowledge of the Thompson-letters, which Mrs. Johnstone gave to Mrs. Ward no earlier than 1828, the separate preservation and coming to light of Mrs. Gibson's set of Thompson-letters 'make' for confidence in the authenticity of Thompson-letters published in the 'Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton,' and in Pettigrew's book.*

(*g*) What evidence is produced against this weighty mass of cogent testimony? Nothing but Lady Hamilton's denials of being the child's mother, and the bare statement to the same effect by a gentleman who in his old age, more than forty years after Nelson's death, conceived himself qualified to state authoritatively that Horatia was not Lady Hamilton's child, but the child of some other woman, whom he could name, if honour permitted him to do so. What counter evidence!—Whilst there is no reason to suppose he was in Nelson's confidence respecting Horatia's parentage, it is certain that Mr. Haslewood, one of the witnesses of Emma Hamilton's last will and testament, saw a good deal of her just about the time of her slanderous utterance against Maria Caroline.

(*h*) To prove that Horatia was Nelson's child by some other woman than Lady Hamilton would be gravely hurtful to Nelson's reputation. No words can do away with the notorious fact that, in the spring of 1800, Nelson was animated by sentiments of admiration for and devotion to Lady Hamilton—sentiments so vehement that they could not have co-existed in his breast with any feeling akin to love for any other woman of his Mediterranean acquaintance. To

* As they app[illegible] Pettigrew's series of Thompson-letters afford no indi[illegible] substantial forgery or of fraudulent manipulatio[illegible]erer be shown to be wholly or partly spurious, h[illegible]ginal MSS., the discovery will not touch the[illegible]stantial evidence that Horatia was Lady[illegible] Nelson believed the child to be his daugh[illegible]

prove, therefore, that during his passion for Lady Hamilton he had a *liaison* with another woman of his Mediterranean acquaintance, would be to prove that the hero of the navy was one of those animals who delight in gross and loveless *amours*. The demonstration would, at the same time, disprove by far the most important of the several extenuating circumstances of his later intercourse with Lady Hamilton, and of his quarrel with his wife. Believing that she was his child's mother, one can sympathize with his steadfastness to Lady Hamilton, and almost admire him for it. Deprived of that belief, one looks in vain for any decent excuse for his conduct to his wife.

II.—*Mr. Laughton's Remarks on the 'Fountain of Arethusa' Letter, said to have been written by Nelson on the 22nd of July*, 1798.

Mr. Laughton says,

'But the whole of the Nelson-Hamilton correspondence is in a very unsatisfactory state. Few of the originals are known, and the letters published by Harrison, or in "Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton," are certainly garbled, even when they are not altogether fictitious. Of this last nature is one which has been often quoted, but which I have not admitted here into the text, as being a palpable forgery. It is supposed to have been written from Syracuse on 22nd July, 1798, and runs:

'"My dear Friends,—Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered; and surely watering at the fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze, and be assured I will return either crowned with laurels or covered with cypress."

'The laurel and cypress sentence may possibly be Nelson's; but assuredly he never meddled with the fountain of Arethusa; and the "Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered" is flatly contradicted by the letter to Sir William Hamilton of the same date. But this fictitious letter is the only evidence on record of the action of Lady Hamilton in this matter. That she afterwards taught Nelson to believe in her action we know from the solemn expression of his last wishes, but the reality of it seems very doubtful.'

What are to Mr. Laughton sufficient reasons for calling the 'Fountain of Arethusa' letter 'a palpable forgery,' appeared to Sir Harris Nicolas nothing more than grounds for being 'suspicious' of the epistle's genuineness. Sir Harris Nicolas says,

'It appears from the Letters to Sir William Hamilton of the 22nd and 23rd of July that Nelson was not aware that any private order for

supplying his squadron had been issued; and as those letters (which are unquestionably authentic) do not agree with the other Letter to Sir William and Lady Hamilton, *a suspicion arises as to its genuineness*, which is strengthened by the facts, that Harrison was then endeavouring to support Lady Hamilton's claim to a pension, founded mainly on her having obtained an order for victualling Nelson's squadron; that the classical allusion is not in Nelson's style; and that the conclusion is in nearly the same words as occur in the Letter in p. 34.'

Let the reader give his best attention to the following matters:—

(A) Under date of 20th of July, 1798, in a letter which Mr. Laughton admits to be authentic, Nelson wrote from Syracuse to Lord St. Vincent, 'We are watering, and getting such refreshments as the place affords, and shall get to sea by the 25th.'

(B) Under date of 22nd of July, 1798, in a letter which Mr. Laughton admits to be authentic, Nelson wrote from Syracuse to Sir William Hamilton, 'I have had so much said about the King of Naples' orders only to admit three or four of the ships of our fleet into his ports that I am astonished. I understood that private orders, at least, would have been given for our free admission. If we are to be refused supplies, pray send me by many vessels an account, that I may in good time take the King's fleet to Gibraltar. Our treatment is scandalous for a great nation to put up with, and the King's flag is insulted at every friendly port we look at.'

(C) Under date of 22nd of July, 1798, in the letter which Mr. Laughton calls 'a palpable forgery,' Nelson is represented as writing from Syracuse to Sir William and Lady Hamilton, 'My dear Friends, —Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered: and surely watering at the fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze, and be assured I will return either crowned with laurels or covered with cypress.'

(D) Under date of 23rd of July, 1798, Nelson wrote in a letter, which Mr. Laughton admits to be authentic, from Syracuse to Sir William Hamilton, 'The fleet is unmoored, and the moment the wind comes off the land, shall go out of this delightful harbour, where our present wants have been most amply supplied, and where every attention has been paid to us; but I have been tormented by no private orders being given to the governor for our admission.'

(1) To some readers it may appear a ground for suspecting the authenticity of C, that it was dated on the same day as the unquestionably authentic B. But because B and C were both dated on the 22nd of July, 1798, it does not follow that they were dated without the intervention of a night. The nautical day ends and begins at noon. A sailor in all things, Nelson ended and began his days at noon, and dated his letters in accordance with nautical usage, at least when he was at sea. Consequently it may be assumed that

B was dated in the afternoon of one day, and C in the following forenoon.

(2) Unquestionably the classical allusion in C is not in Nelson's style, but it is in the style of the classical archæologist, Sir William Hamilton, who was at the time corresponding with Nelson about the supplies to be taken at Syracuse. As Nelson may have caught up the allusion from his correspondent, there is not much force in the objection, based on the single expression.

(3) In C, Nelson wrote or is represented as writing to Sir William and Lady Hamilton on the 22nd of July, 'Thanks to your exertions we have victualled and watered,' whereas in the afternoon of the previous day he wrote in the unquestionably authentic B to Sir William Hamilton, 'If we are to be refused supplies, pray send me by many vessels an account, &c.,' as though he had not succeeded in getting supplies at Syracuse. But this discrepancy can scarcely be urged as strong evidence of the spuriousness of C; because the same discord exists between B and A, both of which are of unquestionable authenticity. Nelson wrote from Syracuse to Lord St. Vincent so early as the 20th of July, 1798, 'We are watering and getting such refreshments as the place affords and shall get to sea by the 25th.'

(4) Consideration must now to be given to a less apparent discrepancy between C and the authentic B, and between C and the authentic D. In C, Nelson wrote, or is represented to have written, on the 22nd of July, 1798, '*Thanks to your exertions*, we have victualled and watered,' whereas he wrote in B on the previous afternoon to Sir William Hamilton, 'I understood that private orders, at least, would have been given for our free admission,' and on the 23rd of July, 1798, wrote to Sir William Hamilton in D, 'but I have been tormented by no private orders being given to the governor for our admission.' Though they may be construed as meaning much less, the words, 'Thanks to your exertions,' have been regarded, alike by Lady Hamilton's friends and by her enemies, as meaning, 'Thanks for your exertions in getting me the Queen's letter.' Hence, it has been argued that, since in authentic B, and in authentic D, Nelson speaks expressly of his annoyance at no 'private orders' having been sent to the Governor of Syracuse, critical readers must

necessarily conclude, that Nelson never received a Queen's warrant, for which he was indebted to Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and that therefore the letter, in which he thanks them for their 'exertions,' and attributes his having watered and victualled to those 'exertions,' must be regarded as a writing of questionable authenticity, if not as a palpable forgery. But here again the apparent discord of the writings may be no real contradiction, but only a mere appearance of discrepancy.

That Nelson obtained the supplies at Syracuse with singular expedition is unquestionable. His own unquestionably authentic letters are also in evidence, that he obtained them without the aid of any such 'private orders' to the Governor of Syracuse, as are referred to in B and D. There is no reason to think he employed menace to get them. How, then, are we to account for the singular expedition with which he got needful water and victuals at Syracuse, at a time when the Sicilian government was bound by treaty with France to admit only 'two' (according to some authorities), or at the most three or four, vessels of war into their ports at the same time? He certainly did not get his supplies in the ordinary way. By what *extra*-ordinary means, then, did he get them? Pettigrew tells us that the Queen herself wrote a warrant, and gave it to Lady Hamilton, in order that she should transmit it to Nelson. We may believe this credible part of Pettigrew's story, whilst rejecting the fanciful and romantic adornments of the narrative. That Pettigrew was right in the main fact, there is strong, though perhaps scarcely conclusive, evidence. No very long time after so watering and victualling at Syracuse, Nelson (who died within seven years and three months of the business) was unquestionably held by the strongest conviction, that the facilities afforded to him for watering and victualling at Syracuse resulted from 'letters,' which the Queen of Naples 'caused to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse,' and there is not a particle of positive evidence that he was not possessed by this conviction when he sailed for the second time to Egypt. There is no positive testimony that this conviction was a delusion. All that can be urged to the discredit of this conviction is, that it is not confirmed by any known official writings, and is in apparent discord with

words written by him in July, 1798,—which words, however, are far from absolutely irreconcilable with the solemn statement of the famous codicil, dated on the 21st of October, 1805. Unless we conclude that, in respect to this particular matter, Nelson's vigorous mind was the victim of a marvellous misconception, that might be fairly called a delusion (the suggestion that he ever spoke or wrote fraudulently on the subject, and only feigned the conviction, is of course not to be entertained for an instant), we must come to the conclusion that the Queen's letters to the Governor of Syracuse did occasion the facility with which Nelson got his supplies there. What were those letters? From Nelson's epistles, it is clear they were not the 'private orders' which, to his annoyance, were not sent to the Governor? Were they not the secret warrant—the single document—referred to by Pettigrew? In speaking of a single royal warrant as 'letters,' Nelson would be speaking in accordance with official and diplomatic usage.

If such a document was confided to Nelson, it may well have been drawn in terms, that in case of mischance would compromise the Queen as little as possible. It may well have been a document to which the Governor of Syracuse might hesitate to give the fullest effect, till he should receive 'private orders for free admission' of the whole fleet. On seeing the Queen's letter on so delicate and dangerous an affair, the Governor of Syracuse only showed a proper care for his own official safety, if he hesitated to put the most liberal interpretation on its words, and averred that till he received 'private orders,' supplementing the secret warrant, he could only regard the warrant as a mandate, that he should afford the British Admiral every facility, not wholly inconsistent with 'the King of Naples' orders only to admit three or four of the ships' of the British fleet at a time, and should strain those orders to the utmost, for the Admiral's advantage. On finding how much more Nelson required—not facility for watering and victualling three or four ships at a time till the whole fleet should be supplied, but facility for watering and victualling all the ships at once—the Governor of Syracuse might well plead his need of further and more precise instructions. One can imagine how, in such a case, Nelson fumed and stormed at the Gover-

nor's representations; and how, after resisting, or making a prudent show of resisting the British Admiral's exorbitant demands, the Governor gave way. To this hypothesis I cannot conceive any serious objections will be made either by naval or official critics. Anyhow, instead of being in flat contradiction, the letters only exhibit a discord that is susceptible of explanation and compatible with the authenticity of C.

(5) Mr. Laughton says of Lady Hamilton and her alleged service to Nelson in this particular business, 'That she afterwards taught Nelson to believe in her action we know from the solemn expression of his last wishes, but the reality of it seems very doubtful.' There is nothing in the famous codicil, from which we may learn that Nelson's conviction respecting Lady Hamilton's 'action' resulted from her artifice. No sufficient evidence can be produced that Nelson made his second voyage to Egypt without the conviction, which is said by Mr. Laughton to have taken possession of his mind at some later time, and to have resulted from Lady Hamilton's teaching.

In the body of this work I have expressed a strong opinion, that both Nelson and Lady Hamilton magnified egregiously whatever services she rendered him in the way of his profession,—the exaggeration on his part resulting from the generous and chivalric delight he took in honouring the woman to whom he was really under some obligations, whilst the exaggeration on her part resulted chiefly from the action of her amazing vanity and self-conceit. On this subject they unintentionally deluded one another. But I am not aware of any evidence that his extravagant estimate of her so-called services to England was in any degree referable to deliberate falseness and craft on her part. For their misconceptions respecting her claims to national gratitude and a pension, I am disposed to think her the less accountable of the two.

But to say that he magnified the services she had rendered him, is a different thing from saying that the services for which he extolled her were perhaps altogether imaginary,—and a still more different thing from suggesting, that he would never have thought himself to be her debtor for consider-

able services, had she not cleverly and artfully taught him to think so.

By playing artfully upon it, a beautiful and designing woman often, no doubt, does what she likes with the weaker side of a strong man's nature. It must be acknowledged that Lady Hamilton did nearly what she pleased with the weaker side of Nelson. But to represent Lady Hamilton as teaching Nelson to misremember one of the remarkable passages of his naval career, and to accept her mere fables about his greater doings as sure history, is to represent her as having what she never had,—her will with the stronger side of his intellect and life. Had he lived to old age, and crossed the threshold of decay, when she is said to have thus played with his wits, the story would be less incredible. But he died when he was still young for an admiral, and when little more than seven years had passed since the Battle of the Nile. His mind had never been stronger than on the eve of Trafalgar. Throughout their curious association, Lady Hamilton had never known his mind otherwise than alert and vigorous. Yet she could *teach* him to believe, that she had caused the Queen of Naples to send out to the Governor of Syracuse those 'private orders' which, to his positive torment at the time, were not sent to the Governor. Making him believe this, she also made him believe those very same secret orders (that, to his acute annoyance in July, 1798, were *not* given to the Governor) had enabled him to water and victual his ships so expeditiously.

As it was quite as much to her interest that Nelson should attribute momentous consequences to her action touching the Spanish king's letter, as that he should conceive himself to have been greatly assisted by her action for getting his fleet victualled at Syracuse, it is strange that, whilst teaching him to think so highly of the later, she did not teach him to attribute imaginary results to the earlier service. As the writer of the codicil remembered so distinctly, that Lady Hamilton's action in sending the Spanish letter so promptly to London in 1796 was fruitless of good to the British Navy, it is fair to assume his memory was not wholly at fault, when he recorded so solemnly that two years later she had aided him materially in getting supplies at Syracuse.

Though I concur with Sir Harris Nicolas in suspecting the genuineness of C, I cannot join with Mr. Laughton in declaring it 'a palpable forgery.' The suspicious letter may be an honest record. Though in the preceding memoir I express a strong opinion that, 'had Lady Hamilton never been born, Nelson's ships would have watered and victualled just as readily at Syracuse,' I cannot conceive the Admiral was absolutely without grounds for thinking Emma Hamilton was greatly serviceable to him in that particular business.

J. C. J.

THE END.

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